

Serbia revolts against federal presidency

BELGRADE (AP) — Serbia's hardline Communist leader declared Saturday that he no longer recognised the authority of the federal presidency, and said he was mobilising the republic's security force to combat internal unrest. Slobodan Milosevic's brief statement on Yugoslav television followed the refusal earlier in the week of the eight-man federal presidency to declare a state of emergency throughout the country.

"Under the existing conditions, the republic does not recognise the legitimacy of the federal presidency," the Tanjug news agency quoted Mr. Milosevic as saying. Mr. Milosevic also said he was ordering a mobilisation of police reservists in his republic, Yugoslavia's largest, against unrest among ethnic Albanians in the Kosovo province and Muslims in Sandzak. But there were no reports of any trouble in either area. (see page 8).

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Baker to make specific proposals

ANKARA (R) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said Saturday he would soon make specific proposals to test the commitment of all sides to peace in the Middle East. He spoke to reporters on a flight from Moscow to Ankara. (see story below) "I have gotten the distinct impression that the parties to the conflict really want true reconciliation and really want to take an active effort for peace," he said. "Whether that sense and impression turns out to be correct, we'll have to wait and see as we test it."

Mr. Baker gave no details but said he would advance specific ideas and proposals "to see whether or not stereotypes can be broken, old rigid and inflexible positions can be adjusted and compromised, because without that there won't be peace." Mr. Baker visited Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Israel and Syria seeking broad endorsement of a four-point framework for peace had stability. It aims to establish new security arrangements, promote economic cooperation, halt the spread of arms and resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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Ramadan begins today

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan Sunday begins the holy month of Ramadan. A statement by Chief Islamic Justice Mohammad Mbeilan said that Sunday, March 17, marks the first day of the holy month of Ramadan during which day fasting will be observed. Amman Governor Jawdat Esboul last week issued a statement ordering all night clubs, liquor stores as well as restaurants to remain closed during day hours. A government communiqué was issued fixing office hours in government departments from 9:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. Saudi Arabia and Libya also said they would observe Ramadan from Sunday.

Iraq bans alcohol during Ramadan

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq Saturday banned the sale of alcohol during Ramadan, and said measures would be taken against offenders. Baghdad Radio said the presidential office also issued orders banning eating, drinking and smoking in public from sunrise to sunset. "The responsible departments must take the necessary measures against violators," the presidential order said. It said nightclubs, shops selling alcohol and hotel bars would be closed. Special licences would be given to tourist restaurants on main roads and to first-class hotels in towns. Iraq has issued such instructions during Ramadan in previous years.

OIC summit in Dakar in December

JEDDAH (AP) — The sixth Islamic summit will be held next December in Dakar, Senegal, the secretary-general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), Hamid Al Ghabid, said Saturday. He told the Associated Press that an exact date was not fixed but said Senegalese President Abdo Diouf proposed that the summit be held in the first half of December. The 45-member OIC is the political umbrella for the world's estimated one billion Muslims. Its headquarters are in Jeddah. The sixth summit was originally scheduled for last January but was postponed because of the Gulf crisis. The OIC summits are convened once every three years. Kuwait hosted the fifth summit in January 1987.

Ireland urges Israel to leave Lebanon

BEIRUT (AP) — Irish Defence Minister Brendan Daly, here to visit his nation's soldiers serving as U.N. peace keepers in South Lebanon, renewed Ireland's backing for Israel to withdraw from the embattled region. Before his tour in the south, Mr. Daly held talks with President Elias Hrawi in west Beirut focusing on the need to implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, which calls for Israel to withdraw its troops from South Lebanon. Mr. Daly told reporters that Ireland "supports implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 425," but gave no details on the Irish position.

Egyptian troops to return home soon

CAIRO (R) — President Hosni Mubarak said Saturday a first contingent of Egyptian troops that took part in the Gulf war would return home in a few days. "The first group of the sons of our armed forces who took part in liberating Kuwait will return to Egypt in the next few days," the national news agency MENA quoted him as telling university students in the Nile Delta town of Zagazig.

Panama asks U.S. to return Noriega

PANAMA CITY (R) — Panama has asked the United States to extradite former strongman General Manuel Noriega after he is tried in Miami, a Panamanian official said Friday. Julio Berrios, legal adviser to Panama's Foreign Ministry, told Reuters authorities sent a formal request in January but had not yet received an answer. Mr. Noriega was ousted in a U.S. invasion in December 1989 and is in jail in Miami awaiting trial on drug-trafficking and racketeering charges.

Saddam says southern revolt crushed, promises democracy

IRAQI PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein said Saturday his government had crushed a rebellion in the south. He also promised major political reforms — including a new cabinet, parliament and constitution and multi-party democracy.

In his first nationally televised address since the Gulf war, President Saddam also said his government would soon defeat Kurdish rebels in the north. "With God's help, we have wiped out the sedition in the southern cities, and we are capable with the help of the people... to uproot the remnants of treason and sabotage," he said.

Rebel sources outside Iraq maintained fierce fighting was continuing.

President Saddam accused the rebels of trying to divide the country into religions and sects. "Does democracy mean that our country should be turned into a group of factions like Lebanon? Iraq will never be a new Lebanon," he said.

Reports of refugees cited by Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) indicated that the southern Shiite rebellion was continuing. Without mentioning it by name, President Saddam accused Iran of encouraging the rebellion. Tehran has long sheltered dissident Iraqi Shiite groups, but has denied any part in the insurrection.

"I feel bitter that some of our neighbours with whom we have been trying to establish peace have made their territory a springboard for treachery against Iraq," said President Saddam, a reference to Iraq's 1980-88 war with Iran.

The liberalisation moves are an apparent attempt to quell the twin rebellions rocking Iraq in the turmoil that followed the Gulf force may be required to maintain security in the Gulf, perhaps under the United Nations authority and with participation of Arab troops.

Mr. Bush's two-and-a-half-hour meeting with Mr. Major on this rain-swept Atlantic island was the third in a series of post-war consultations the president is holding with allied leaders. He saw French President Francois Mitterrand on Friday and Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney Thursday.

Mr. Bush said the United States and its allies have not settled on an approach to a lasting peace in the Middle East. (Continued on page 5)

Bush, Major want Iraq's chemical arms destroyed

HAMILTON, Bermuda (Agencies) — U.S. President George Bush and British Prime Minister John Major Saturday called for the destruction of Iraq's chemical weapons arsenal as part of the conditions for a permanent ceasefire in the Gulf.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's "credibility is zilch, zero, zed," Mr. Bush said after private talks with Mr. Major on post-war Gulf policy. Mr. Major said Iraq would have to take several steps before international economic sanctions are lifted. For example, he said, Iraq must destroy its chemical weapons under international supervision and it must clearly

assert Kuwait's sovereignty. Mr. Bush said conditions of a permanent ceasefire included an end to flights of Iraqi aircraft that the United States claims are being used to quell anti-government revolt.

The U.S. president reacted sceptically to President Saddam's promises of democratic reforms. "If he's proclaiming Iraq will be a democratic nation, fine... the proof of that pudding is in the eating," he said.

Mr. Major said Iraq also must release all detained people it is holding and set aside part of its oil revenues to pay war reparations. Mr. Bush said a peacekeeping

force may be required to maintain security in the Gulf, perhaps under the United Nations authority and with participation of Arab troops.

Mr. Bush said the United States and its allies have not settled on an approach to a lasting peace in the Middle East. (Continued on page 5)

Mr. Baker issued his own warning to Baghdad, telling the government it would violate the Gulf war ceasefire if it used fixed-wing aircraft against rebels in Iraq.

The two ministers spoke with reporters after a four-hour meeting with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev that failed to resolve an impasse over two arms control treaties or set a date for a U.S.-Soviet summit postponed from last month.

Mr. Bessmertnykh said the two sides had similar views on the approach to peacemaking following the Gulf war. Asked how Moscow would

the United States Friday against any use of force to topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein from power.

Mr. Baker said the U.S. would support a nuclear-free zone and returning foreign military presence to levels that existed before Aug. 1, 1990. Iraq invaded Kuwait the following day, prompting a massive U.S.-led multi-national effort to reverse the occupation.

The new Kremlin peace blueprint also calls for international economic cooperation in post-war reconstruction and use of the U.N. Military Staff Committee in crises. Finally, it proposes a new drive to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict to help reduce tensions in the Gulf.

Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh cautioned he told journalists before meeting former Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaly Churkin acknowledged that the differences had prevented agreement on what the United States says are Soviet violations of last November's agreement on conventional forces in Europe.

Mr. Baker later arrived in Turkey for talks with President Turgut Ozal, touching down hours after leftists claimed responsibility for a series of bombs explosions at buildings with U.S. links. Mr. Baker was making a three-hour stop to brief Mr. Ozal that the Bush administration supports the territorial integrity of Iraq, which shares a long border with Turkey.

Mr. Ozal is concerned about the chaos in Iraq following the allied success in forcing it to withdraw from Kuwait, worried it could cause further instability to the region. (Continued on page 3)

"This is a decisive and irreversible decision," he said. The concept of political pluralism is foreign to modern Iraqi political life, with the only legal party the ruling Baath Arab Socialist Party.

President Saddam said that a new cabinet will be formed to carry out national reconstruction and to provide basic services to the populace.

Arab diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the cabinet would be opened to technocrats and others not belonging to the ruling Baath Party.

Speaking on Baghdad Television, President Saddam offered no compromise to the rebels. But he told Iraqis that "in spite of all the difficulties" it was time to press ahead with democratic reforms delayed by the Gulf crisis.

(Continued on page 5)

Angry Sawahreh residents confronted the Israeli forces which fired tear-gas to disperse them, police said. They said 25 people were detained in connection with the incident.

Israel placed the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip under a month-long 24-hour curfew when the Gulf war broke out on Jan. 17. A night curfew and restriction on movement between cities in the occupied territories is still in effect.

Since Gulf war fighting was halted on Feb. 28, one other village and a refugee camp in Arab Jerusalem have been placed under curfew for several days following clashes with police.

East Taji is one of a ring of Jewish neighbourhoods built in Jerusalem just over the pre-1967 green line.

Troops shot and wounded three Palestinians during clashes at Jenin in the West Bank on Saturday morning, Palestinian sources said. The army imposed a curfew on the town's market afterwards.

Curfews continued for a third day in the villages of Qabatiya and Yaaband, they said. In the Gaza Strip, a 50-day-long curfew continued to be imposed on Palestine Square in the heart of Gaza City, Palestinians said.

Israeli authorities have informed the directors of education and instruction in the West Bank of their decision to close government, private and United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools on March 30 and 31 in anticipation of escalated protests to mark Land Day.

Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah issued a statement in Rome Thursday, accusing Israel of desecrating the holy places. The statement was issued after a group of Christian and Muslim Palestinians he is leading met with the Pope to present him with a "call for peace in the Middle East."

The delegation is being hosted by Comunione Liberazione, a theologically conservative Catholic organisation. During the meeting, the Pope told his visitors that he would like to visit the Holy Land.

In a statement issued following the meeting, Patriarch Sabbah said: "The holy places have been desecrated by the Israeli occupation authorities." He also said that Israel had violated religious freedom and called for international protection of the Palestinians against the Israeli occupation forces.

Curfew in Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli authorities imposed a curfew on a neighbourhood in Arab Jerusalem Saturday for the third time since the end of the Gulf war, army radio said.

The authorities imposed the curfew before dawn on Sawahreh after Palestinians clashed with Israeli forces who entered the area to search for suspects who threw a petrol bomb into the adjoining neighbourhood of East Taji, the radio said.

No one was injured in the clashes. Angry Sawahreh residents confronted the Israeli forces which fired tear-gas to disperse them, police said. They said 25 people were detained in connection with the incident.

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Peace, stability need all-embracing approach, Jordan tells Prague forum

ANY REALISTIC move towards comprehensive peace and stability in the Middle East needs a broad framework involving political, economic, demographic, geographic and military aspects of the region, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said Saturday.

In a recorded address delivered to an international symposium in Prague entitled "Looking beyond the Gulf war: A conference on security and cooperation in the Middle East," the Crown Prince outlined the major elements and approach that Jordan believes should be addressed in this context.

Following is the full text of the (Continued on page 5)

Crown Prince leaves on visits to Europe, U.S.

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath left Saturday on working visits to the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States to discuss regional development and the post-war situation in the Middle East and the Gulf region.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that the Crown Prince would first visit Oxford University, in England, to deliver a lecture on the adverse consequences of the Gulf crisis on Jordan's social and economic life.

Accompanied by His Majesty King Hussein's Political Advisor Adnan Abu Odeh, Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath will later pay private visit to Ottawa and San Francisco where the Crown Prince will address a conference. (Continued on page 5)

Royal Decree recesses House session

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Royal Decree was issued Saturday ending the current session of the Lower House of Parliament effective March 17, 1991, in accordance with Article 78 of the Jordanian Constitution.

According to the Constitution, the next ordinary session is due in October. However, another

Royal Decree could convene Parliament in an extraordinary session to discuss specified issues.

The Royal Decree was read out in Parliament, which Saturday held its last meeting in the current ordinary session.

During the session, replies by the government to deputies' queries were read out and the House heard reports by its committees on their work in the ordinary session.

Credible balance of payments remains CBJ priority — Nabulsi

By Samir Shafiq
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The balance of payments was and will continue to be the most and main concern for the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), the bank's governor told a meeting of businessmen Saturday.

The CBJ governor, Dr. Mohammad Saeed Al Nabulsi, said that since 1983 the Kingdom has suffered from a deep recession, achieved no growth and, actually, in some years it recorded negative growth in contrast to the unprecedented "golden" years of the seventies.

Dr. Nabulsi reviewed briefly the period after 1985 when the country suffered a series of economic and financial turbulences which, later, forced the CBJ to intervene and adopt "surgical" measures to correct a serious monetary "disaster".

The political and economical climate in the region also was changing very fast culminating in the Gulf crisis, whose effects, Dr. Nabulsi described as uncompensated in its severity on all business



Mohammad Saeed Al Nabulsi

sectors of Jordan. As such, the governor said, patience and wisdom were mostly needed during the current phase. Summarising the dilemma between government policies, banking requirements and demands of businesses, Dr. Nabulsi said that the thorny issue at stake now was how to equate between the national duty of achieving growth, controlling inflation and

defending the balance of payments of the country on one hand and satisfying business needs for increased cheap banking credits and maintaining adequate resources of credit on the other.

After outlining the government's monetary target, Dr. Nabulsi addressed the following five points raised by Mr. Mohammad Asfour, board chairman of the Amman Chamber of Commerce:

- Cash margin required for opening letters of credit (L.Cs).
- Limit on overdrafts or advances under current account.
- Export L.Cs.
- Cheques drawn on foreign banks.
- Flexibility by banks due to current adverse economic situation.

The CBJ governor said that the cash margin for L.Cs had been lowered several times and it would be lowered more in the future if the Kingdom's monetary situation continues to improve further.

(Continued on page 3)

Levy says joint peace talks with Arabs possible

FRANKFURT, Germany (Agencies) — Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy was quoted as saying Saturday that his country was ready to hold talks with a group of Arab states, or one at a time, to help solve the Middle East crisis.

In an interview with leftist Frankfurter Rundschau newspaper, Mr. Levy was also quoted as saying that Israel would only talk with elected Palestinian representatives, but not with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

In the interview, conducted in Bonn during Mr. Levy's March 11-15 visit to Germany, the foreign minister commented on U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's remarks after talks last week with Middle East leaders.

Following those talks, including with President Hafez Al Assad of Syria, Mr. Baker said he saw possibilities towards peace in the Middle East.

"I hope that he (Mr. Baker) has grounds for such a declaration," Mr. Levy responded. Mr. Levy said that Mr. Baker had informed him of his talks "and insured me that for the first time he could speak about an agreement with Israel without provoking an anti-Israeli reaction."

Mr. Levy also told the newspaper that Mr. Baker's talks with the Arab leaders were concretely aimed at starting up peace talks with Israel.

Mr. Levy was quoted as saying

that the United States and other Western countries want to insure that the Gulf war "is the last one in the Middle East."

"Baker told me he is optimistic," Mr. Levy was quoted as saying.

Mr. Levy described two problems that he said must be solved on a parallel basis in the Middle East crisis.

"One is the direct bilateral talks between Israel and the Arab states, and the other the problem of talks with elected representatives of the Palestinians from the West Bank, and the Gaza," Mr. Levy was quoted as saying.

Mr. Levy told the newspaper that he was against so called eight-plus-one talks that appeared to pit a group of Arab states against Israel.

"It would be very dangerous when the regional defence alliance of the eight Arab states led to a constellation of eight against Israel. Therefore a possibility must be found for Israel to be included," Mr. Levy quoted as saying.

Mr. Levy said that Baker's efforts were aimed at "establishing trust to develop an alliance that Israel can join."

Asked if the United States and the Soviets might be a part of such an alliance, Mr. Levy said he had not discussed that point with Mr. Baker.

"We talked about direct negotiations between Israel and the

No more odds and evens

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government has scrapped a law introduced on Feb. 5 allowing private cars to run only on alternate days and said that all cars regardless of the numbers on their licence plates can run as of Sunday March 17.

The statement said that on the occasion of the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan, and depending on the Jordanian citizens' awareness of the need to reduce fuel consumption the government decided to cancel its regulations introduced last month. It said that it is hoped that the motorists will adopt measures of their own to reduce fuel consumption as much as possible and to use their cars only when it is necessary.

The statement was issued at the end of a cabinet session chaired by Prime Minister Mudar Badran, who two weeks ago issued the order, which, however, allowed all cars to run on Fridays.

The measure was originally introduced in the wake of damages to Iraqi facilities by allied bombing and attacks on oil tanker trucks bringing in crude oil from Iraq to Jordan and to cut down on fuel spending.

The government last Wednesday scrapped regulations introduced last October (Continued on page 5)

U.N. chief calls for aid for 7.7 million Sudanese

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — A drought is endangering 7.7 million Sudanese, and Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar is appealing to the world community to send 1.3 million tons of food.

Up to a million Sudanese could die from malnutrition disease or starvation if the campaign is not successful, U.N. officials say.

The cost of the food, and its shipment by freighters, distribution in Sudan, storage and handling will cost about \$600 million, said U.N. spokesman Francois Guiliani.

Sudan also needs about \$30 million in non-food aid to cover health needs, nutrition, water supply and sanitation, and shelter, which will require additional logistic expense of \$27 million, he said.

The entire relief operation is estimated at about \$717 million, Mr. Guiliani said.

Sudan has been blighted by civil war, famine, drought and floods for years.

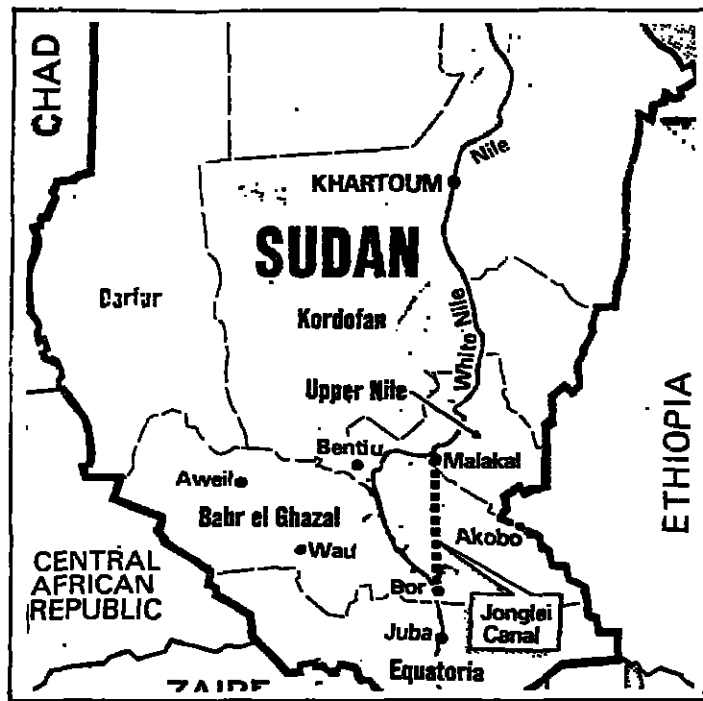
In 1988, about 250,000 people died of war-induced starvation and disease, prompting the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) to head the multi-agency Operation Lifeline Sudan in 1989-90.

That campaign delivered over 100,000 tons of food to southern Sudan to prevent starvation among 100,000 people.

The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) is fighting for autonomy for the three southern provinces, which are populated mainly by Christians and animists.

The Islamic government of Sudan's military ruler Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, has attempted to impose Islamic law on the country.

The Gulf war forced U.N. officials to postpone the relief campaign for several weeks in January because they feared the out-



break of anti-United Nations unrest in Sudan.

The United States said that nine million Sudanese were at imminent risk of starvation and millions more in Ethiopia, Somalia, Angola and Liberia also faced famine.

At a news conference organized by the Agency for International Development (AID), its assistant Africa administrator, Scott Spangler, said more than one million tons of food would be needed to avert mass starvation in Sudan.

Displaying satellite photographs to illustrate the area where crops had failed, Mr. Spangler said: "In Sudan, the situation is most serious... and it can only worsen. We cannot assure that the needed food will get to all the needy in time."

There were already reports of

people starving in the south of the country but the civil war made it difficult to get international aid workers into some of the areas of greatest need to assess the situation.

All the countries mentioned are torn by civil war. Fighting in Ethiopia was getting worse while Liberia and Somalia had been devastated by internal strife.

U.S. officials said the recent upsurge of fighting in Ethiopia had disrupted aid efforts and some 750,000 tonnes of food were needed to feed up to six million people at risk of starvation.

In addition, almost two million people were at risk in Angola and 1.85 million in Liberia. In Somalia, the situation was so confused that it was difficult even to get help to those in need, officials said.

Baker asks Arab allies to end Israel boycott

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State James Baker has asked Arab foreign ministers for an end to boycotts of companies that trade with Israel, as a goodwill gesture to pave the way for peace talks, diplomatic sources said Friday.

Mr. Baker, who just completed a swing through the Middle East, asked Israel to reciprocate by halting expulsions and other punitive measures against Palestinians from the occupied territories, said the sources.

In talks this week, Mr. Baker tried to build on Arab confidence and enhance U.S. prestige by nudging Arabs and Israelis towards the negotiating table.

At his meeting last Saturday in Saudi Arabia with eight foreign ministers, including those of Kuwait, Egypt and Syria, Mr. Baker asked that the 21-member Arab League stop blacklisting international companies trading with Israel. The Arab boycott is coordinated from offices in Syria which monitor the compliance of companies around the world.

The United States in 1976 banned U.S. firms from adhering to the boycott, but many European and Japanese firms comply.

Companies in Japan, relying heavily on oil from the Middle East, comply the most. The World Jewish Congress contended in a report Friday, Corporate giants such as Toyota, Nissan and Toshiba, encouraged by their government, are among the firms that refuse business with Israel, the report said.

A group of 82 senators wrote the emir of Kuwait this week asking his government to lift the boycott and not to exclude American firms doing business with Israel from reconstruction projects in the oil-rich emirate.

Such a step, wrote the senators led by Joseph Lieberman and Carl Levin, "would constitute an important gesture towards peace in the region and would eliminate a source of friction in the relationship between our two countries."

Members of the House, led by Rep. Mel Levine, are addressing a similar letter to the ambassadors of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Mr. Baker has been looking for ways to slowly build trust between Arabs and Israelis, divided for decades by bitterness and war, so the Israelis will "give" up

occupied territories and the Arabs will recognise Israel's right to live in peace.

"One obvious vehicle for creating confidence building measures is lifting the boycott," said Jess Hordes, Washington representative for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). The ADL, along with other American Jewish organisations, has been urging the administration to use its influence with the Arabs to that end.

Mr. Hordes said the idea was for the Arabs to stop blacklisting international firms as an interim measure. Once peace is reached, the Arabs would lift the boycott entirely allowing Arab nationals to trade with Israel.

In a 22-page report, the World Jewish Congress (WJC) described Japan as "the country whose indiscriminate, government-encouraged compliance with the Arab boycott surpasses that of any industrialised state."

A spokesman for the Japanese embassy in Washington said that his country has never supported the Arab boycott of Israel and wants to see the boycott ended as quickly as possible.

The WJC report said that many of Japan's major companies — including Toyota, Nissan, Mazda, Hitachi, Canon, Toshiba and Nippon Steel — refuse any business dealings with Israel, while others like Sony, Sharp and Matsushita (Panasonic) allow only direct business dealings.

"When approached by potential Israeli customers, Japanese companies often inform them openly that due to the Arab boycott, they are unable to supply the requested items," the report said.

The Japanese embassy spokesman said he could not comment on individual Japanese companies but added that trade between Israel and Japan had tripled in the last five years.

The WJC said the increase in trade was due to trading with smaller Japanese companies that do not do business with Arab states. About seven per cent of Israeli exports go to Japan, the bulk of it being cut diamonds.

During the Gulf war, Japan cut off postal and banking links with the Gulf states, Jordan, Syria and Israel. In Israel, the action resulted in halted shipments, non-acceptance of letters of credit and even cases of breaches of contract, the WJC said.

Ethiopia confirms halt in flow of Falashas

ADDIS ABABA (Agencies) — The government said it has temporarily suspended the emigration of Ethiopian Jews (Falashas) to Israel because of irregularities by Jewish aid agencies.

In a statement Friday, the foreign affairs ministry said the emigration programme would be allowed to continue as soon as the problems are rectified.

It neither specified the irregularities nor identified the Jewish agencies involved in the programme.

The statement noted the government had authorised the programme on a case-by-case basis, requiring individual applications.

"Gross and repeated irregularities were being committed in the process and the concerned authorities of the government had time and again requested that such irregularities be rectified, but the irregularities continued and increased to the point where it proved impossible to process applications," it said.

The secretary of the Ethiopian Organisation in Israel, Rahamin Elazar, accused the government of President Mengistu Haile Mariam Wednesday of halting the programme to pressure Israel to supply it with military assistance in the face of renewed rebel activity in the north.

The Ethiopian statement called that accusation "baseless, slanderous and contrary to the gesture of goodwill and humanitarian considerations that are the sole motive for the government's agreement to the family reunification programme."

The emigration of Ethiopian Jews began in 1981 in secrecy under the code name "Operation Moses." An estimated 15,000 Ethiopian Jews were airlifted to Israel from the northwestern province of Gondar through Sudan.

The operation was suspended after news of the operation was made public. At that time, the Ethiopian government had no diplomatic relations with Israel.

The two countries reestablished diplomatic ties in November 1989, but only about 3,500 Falashas were allowed to emigrate in 1990.

Under pressure from the United States, the Ethiopian government agreed to the stepped-up reunification programme and an estimated 2,000 a month have been leaving for Israel since the first of the year.

Rebels say they killed 900 Ethiopian rebels said they killed 900 government troops and wounded 870 in fighting on the borders between the northern Tigre and Eritrea provinces.

The clandestine radio of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) late Friday, said government forces were routed when they tried to capture the rebel-held town of Adwa.

The radio said the offensive was launched from an area about 80 kilometres south of Asmara, the government-held Eritrean provincial capital.

There was no government confirmation of the report about the attack on Adwa, 140 kilometres south of Asmara.

An estimated 120,000 government troops are defending Asmara, which is surrounded by EPLF forces.

Fighting flared at the end of last month between the EPLF and government forces along the southern coast of Eritrea, soon after a round of peace talks between both sides in Washington.

The EPLF is fighting for the independence of Eritrea.

Turkey reverses policies on Iraqi Kurds, holds out at home

ANKARA (AP) — The Turkish government's announcement that it had met with Iraqi Kurdish insurgents marked a milestone for the Kurds, the world's largest ethnic minority without a homeland.

But Turkey's about-face in policy does not necessarily indicate any major changes soon for the largest group of Kurds — those in Turkey itself.

Turkey is home to more than half the 25 million people in Kurdistan, an area that includes southeastern Turkey and parts of Iraq, Iran, Syria and the Soviet Union. Kurds from 20 per cent of Turkey's population.

The Foreign Ministry said Wednesday that Turkey invited the Iraqi Kurds to Ankara. The Kurds included Jalal Talabani, head of the Iraqi-Kurdish Front, the coalition battling the Iraqi army in northern Iraq, bordering Turkey. The rebels claimed to have captured several cities and were fighting for Kirkuk, a major oil centre.

The ministry said Turkey held the meeting only to hear the rebels' plans, not to pledge support. But for a country that has viewed Kurds as a major security threat for seven decades, the meeting was a significant step.

"This incident is one of the most important decisions in Turkish political history," wrote Sami Kohen, a senior columnist for the Istanbul daily Milliyet, on Thursday. "It indicated an essential policy change towards the Kurds and the Kurdish issue in the region."

But Kurdish separatism still unnerves the government and the powerful army, since it aims at turning much of Turkey's south-east into a Kurdish state.

In addition, Turkey has traditionally viewed Kurdish separatists as pawns of foreign powers. Turkey has accused Syria of aiding Kurdish insurgents involved in a seven-year battle in the southeast that has claimed 3,000 lives.

In the past, Turkey cooperated with Iraq in fighting their Kurdish insurgents. Before the Gulf war, Turkey went as far as threatening war to prevent the emergence of an independent Kurdish

state.

But foreign and Turkish observers say the government has changed its tune because of these factors:

— Iran has important influence among Shi'ite Muslims in southern Iraq. Turkey hopes to have a buffer between itself and Iranian forces who might seek to upset the state-mandated secularism in this Muslim country.

— Turkey believes Kurds are likely to achieve some sort of autonomy in northern Iraq. If Turkey is friendly with the Iraqi Kurds, it can keep them from supporting Turkish Kurds.

— "If we become enemies with them (Iraqi Kurds), others will use it against us," President Turgut Ozal said.

In recent weeks, Iraqi Kurdish leaders have pledged in interviews not to hurt Turkey.

Nonetheless, Turkey's recognition of the Iraqi Kurdish rebels has come under fire. The military general staff has opposed the move, according to the reliable daily Cumhuriyet.

Opposition leaders accused Mr. Ozal of further abandoning Turkey's traditional neutrality in conflicts with its Middle Eastern neighbours.

"This is playing with fire," declared Suleyman Demirel, leader of the True Path Party.

Mr. Ozal could also face opposition from within his centre-right Motherland Party. Conservatives in the party have staunchly defended Turkey's policy of banning most forms of Kurdish culture at home.

They have postponed any action on a bill approved by the cabinet in January that would allow use of the Kurdish language in informal settings.

Turkey has been warily watching the Iraqi Kurds' rebellion, nervous about any spillover effect. There has been a spate of protests in Kurdish areas near the Iraqi border recently, although few people expect any sort of uprising in Turkey.

Turkish security forces have broken up the protests and detained demonstrators. Two protesters were killed during a demonstration March 4.

Big five begin talks on new U.N. resolution ending Gulf war

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council have begun negotiations on a resolution setting out terms for a permanent ceasefire, including a token U.N. peacekeeping force on Iraq's border with Kuwait.

Diplomats at the talks, who spoke on condition of anonymity, disclosed that a draft resolution was expected to be drawn up by the United States next week after President George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker complete talks with allied leaders and the Soviet Union.

U.S., British and French envoys, however, cautioned that any final resolution would probably still raise the spectre of a resumption of force by allied troops if Iraq did not fulfill its obligations.

The Security Council on March 2 adopted Resolution 686, putting a U.N. seal of approval on allied conditions for a temporary ceasefire in the Gulf war. The new resolution is to add several more conditions and spell out some of the earlier demands.

A major problem, diplomats said, was the return of Kuwaiti abducted by Iraqi forces, which Kuwait insists number over 33,000.

Allies are considering giving a central role to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) of arbitrating between the Kuwaiti and Iraqi versions of the numbers of dead and captured before any permanent ceasefire is honoured.

Other main elements expected in the resolution are:

— A token U.N. peacekeeping force of about 250 military observers rather than a more substantial group as first suggested among allies. Kuwait wants the U.N. group to clearly demarcate

its border with Iraq.

— Conditions under which allied forces would withdraw from Iraq and Kuwait.

— The partial lifting of economic sanctions. Britain is insisting on a ban on chemical and biological weapons. Sources said China had raised some tentative objections to the scope of the British proposal.

— A mechanism under which Iraq is forced to return immediately Kuwaiti government property, such as gold, currency, aircraft, museum pieces and documents.

— Another mechanism for dealing with war damages or reparations, such as an international tribunal with binding arbitration. Diplomats said this might be tied to the lifting of most economic sanctions as Iraq would have to sell oil again to raise revenues.

— A removal of the Baghdad government's right to sue foreign companies unable to fulfill their contracts with Iraq because of the U.N. trade embargo imposed last August.

Dropped from serious consideration are earlier suggestions of a war crimes tribunal, which one envoy said was impractical for the council to consider.

The resolution is also expected to include a passage warning Iraq not to engage in "terrorism." But one senior envoy said it would not be a major point in the text.

The draft is not expected to be circulated to all 15 council members until late next week, after broad agreement from the five — the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and China.

Iraqi U.N. Representative Abdul Al Anbari said Friday the United Nations should name an authority to draw up a list of property alleged to have been looted from Kuwait.

"We believe that the best way is for the Security Council and the

secretary general to designate an authority or a person and they will make a list and register whatever Iraqis have."

"After all, so many things are not accountable by either side, either by the Iraqis or the Kuwaitis," he told reporters after a meeting with Security Council President Peter Hohenfeller of Austria.

Kuwaiti U.N. Ambassador Mohammad Abulhasan told reporters Wednesday that public and government property allegedly destroyed or looted by Iraq during its seven-month occupation of the emirate could total between \$70 billion and \$100 billion. He said he was giving the council lists of items.

Mr. Anbari said the council president had raised this issue with him "in an informal way."

"We have told the president of the Security Council the type of things that we have in our possession and we are ready to deliver them to anyone designated by the Security Council or by the secretary general."

But alluding to possible differences between Kuwaiti and Iraqi accounts, Mr. Anbari said: "We don't expect things to move in a very cordial and smooth way. It's understandable. There are feelings now of bitterness on both sides and we feel that there are problems that could last perhaps for years in order to be settled on both sides."

He said he also told the council president that Iraq had extended all facilities to the ICRC regarding Kuwaiti detainees, some 3,500 of whom had so far been registered.

But Kuwait was apparently unwilling to receive them until their nationality had been verified and they remained "stranded in the middle," he added.

Helicopter crash in Iraq brings U.S. deaths to 324

RIYADH (R) — A U.S. Blackhawk helicopter has crashed in Iraq, killing six servicemen, the U.S. military said Friday.

Three other American servicemen were reported killed on Friday, bringing to 324 total U.S. losses since Washington first sent forces to the Gulf after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait last Aug. 2.

U.S. central command said a soldier, assigned to the 34th signal battalion, was found dead Tuesday of a gunshot wound. A second soldier died on Tuesday when his five-tonne truck overturned. It did not say where the incidents happened.

An air force sergeant fell to his death at a Dubai hotel on Wednesday, it said.

A U.S. military source said separately that reports of new U.S. military movements in southern Iraq, two weeks after the Gulf war ended, were being "overblown out of all proportion."

Central command spokesman Brigadier-General Richard Neal told the Los Angeles Times that American troops, ordered to reoccupy former positions, were driving up to 50 kilometres deeper into Iraq territory.

The newspaper said the move appeared to be part of President George Bush's effort to increase pressure on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

A U.S. military official said what had happened was that some U.S. military commanders had wanted to reposition their

forces closer to bases in southern Iraq.

But he said allied commander-in-chief General Norman Schwarzkopf had opposed this and told the commanders to reoccupy their original positions.

An International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) official in the Saudi capital confirmed a report from Baghdad that around 500 Iraqi prisoners of war had been returned home on Friday.

The official, who asked not to be named, said the ICRC had handed over 499 prisoners to the Iraqi authorities.

About 800 of 60,000 Iraqi soldiers captured by the allies during the six-week war have now been sent home from camps in Saudi Arabia.

Central command said the wreck of a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter, missing since Tuesday, was found on Thursday in Iraq. "All six occupants aboard the aircraft were killed." It did not give a location but said the crash was an accident.

It said the helicopter belonged to the 36th medical detachment, 44th medical brigaded, but said the names of the dead would not be released until next of kin had been informed.

The spokesman said 324 U.S. servicemen had died since the United States and its allies began a huge military buildup in the Gulf region after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Allies dropped 88,500 tonnes of bombs on Iraq

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Allied jets dropped 88,500 tonnes of bombs on Iraq and Kuwait and used more precision-guided "smart bombs" during the 43-day Gulf war than those dropped on Vietnam during that nine-year conflict, the U.S. Defence Department said Friday.

U.S. air force Chief of Staff General Merrill McPeak said a small number of radar-avoiding U.S. F-117A "Stealth" fighters were the most effective weapons of the air war, smashing Iraqi air defence radars within hours after the war began.

Giving key details of the air campaign for the first time, Gen. McPeak said at a Defence Department briefing that U.S. jets dropped about 75 per cent of the total bombs dropped by allied attack jets and heavy bombers on Iraqi military targets in Iraq and Kuwait.

The 88,500 tonnes of bombs dropped included 6,520 tonnes of precision weapons such as laser-guided bombs used to destroy government buildings in central Baghdad, hardened concrete aircraft shelters and bridges over the Euphrates River, Gen. McPeak said.

"In 43 days we far exceeded our tonnage of precision-guided munitions in a war that lasted eight or nine years," he added, comparing the Gulf to Vietnam.

The general said that between Aug. 7 and Feb. 23, the day the ground war began, some 2,700 aircraft were deployed by the allies, with nearly 2,000 of those being combat planes.

Forty-six per cent of the combat aircraft stationed within the continental United States flew to the Gulf to participate in the war, he said. The support aircraft flew "the largest airlift in history" during the war effort, he said.

Overall, 109,876 sorties were flown, with the U.S. air force conducting nearly 60 per cent, he said.

The general said the allies could confirm that the Iraqis lost 234 aircraft during the conflict, and that 141 more were believed lost during allied attacks on air shelters.

Gen. McPeak said there were 13 Americans lost from "friendly fire" incidents of air-to-ground fire, but that there were no air-to-air encounters between allied forces that took any lives.

Gen. McPeak, who showed charts and flickering gun-camera films of bombs striking targets, said the massive Iraqi air force of well over 700 planes would be no threat to the region "for another generation."

"A generation of pilots and crew chiefs and mechanics and air leaders has certainly vanished. I think it will be a long time before they constitute a significant threat again," he told reporters.

He said on-the-ground estimates now show that nearly all of Iraq's more than 4,000 tanks were destroyed, nearly half its 3,000 other armoured vehicles and nearly all of its artillery by the beginning of the ground war. He gave no estimates of the numbers of Iraqi soldiers killed in the conflict.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

PRAYER TIMES	
06:23	Fajr
05:40	(Sunrise) Duha
11:44	Dhuhr
15:09	'Asr
17:48	Maghreb
19:05	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifich Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627480	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661257	
Terzian Church Tel. 622306	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 625303, Tel. 627480	

628543	Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
771331	Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
775261	Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751
771751	Armenian International Church Tel. 683326
683326	Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
811295	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Some clouds appear at different altitudes gradual rise in temperatures will take place. Winds will be southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and sea calm.	

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Mohammad Al Ajam	894184
Dr. Ramez Al Mazza	894788
Dr. Ibrahim Abu Hamoud	677436
Dr. Othman Mustafa	774024

Firas pharmacy	661912
Fordons pharmacy	778336
Al Asama pharmacy	637055
Natroukh pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636720
Yacoub pharmacy	644946
Shamsi pharmacy	637660
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111

Civil Defence Immediate	
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	845402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	
Complaints	874667
Amman Municipality	
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information	
(directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	
Repairs	623101
Abdull Telephone Repairs	661101

Meeting reviews water situation in Mafrag

MAFRAQ (Petra) — A meeting was held Saturday at Al Mafrag Governorate headquarters under the chairmanship of Minister of Water and Irrigation Saad Hayel Sarour to discuss issues related to water supply and irrigation.

The meeting, which was attended by the Mafrag governor, the mayor of the city, and directors of the governorate's police and water departments, decided to conduct a study on the damaged water network in the city in order to announce tender

bids to replace it and to hold another study on carrying out the second stage of the sewerage network project.

The participants at the meeting decided to authorise Al Mafrag Municipality to use water from the city pool to irrigate plants in public gardens and parks and to supply it with two tankers to irrigate forest trees.

In another development, Mr. Sarour toured several areas in the northern and eastern badia regions to familiarise himself with the water situation there.

Suspected embezzlers arrested

AMMAN (J.T.) — A three-member group was arrested while trying to cash forged cheques in the black market, which has been thriving in the country since legal money-changing offices were closed in February 1989.

A report in the local press said that Marwan Al Alami, moneychanger, was deceived by one of three people identified by the police only as A.Ah. who, the report said, succeeded in presenting a false cheque drawn on an American bank.

The report said that the embezzler had posed as a dealer in food supplies who also claimed to be exporting goods to Gulf states.

The moneychanger accepted the first and second cheques, together amounting to more than JD 243,000 in foreign currency, but later was suspicious when the embezzler offered a third cheque with a large sum said the report.

Mr. Alami made some en-

quiries immediately and contacted the bank in America only to find out that the cheques were false and that it was all a fraud as the embezzler had no account.

Mr. Alami then decided to report the matter to the police, but had to call the embezzler to his office first under the pretense that he wanted to cash his third cheque, the report continued.

Once he was in the office, Mr. Alami's associate called in the police who arrested the man, the report added.

It said that the embezzler reenacted the whole episode before the police. "The deception went on for a whole week, but it took the police only a few hours to round up the three culprits," the report said.

It said that the police have retrieved the money, but handed it to the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) pending the completion of investigations.



A worker packs milk in crates to be sent to Baghdad in yet another convoy of relief supplies to the Iraqis (Photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

ICRC, Japanese organisation send relief supplies to Iraq

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Over 250 tonnes of wheat flour and lentils and 25 tonnes of medicine left Amman Saturday in the largest relief convoy to leave Baghdad since the eruption of the Gulf crisis on Aug. 2.

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) officials, the convoy of 30 trucks is accompanied by 33 buses to be placed at the disposal of ICRC delegates in Baghdad to "transfer prisoners of war and civilian victims of war."

The shipment also includes a camp module which will be installed in Baghdad and will house 5,000 people at any given time.

"This is our fourth and our largest relief convoy to leave Amman to Baghdad since we started operating after the end of the Gulf war," Michel Schroeder, press attaché of the ICRC delegation in Amman told the Jordan Times.

The biggest problem facing relief projects in Iraq, Mr. Schroeder said, is sanitation. "Our problem is how to make it work again. We need fuel for generators and war purification lines," Mr. Schroeder said, adding that Saturday's convoy is also carrying

100 tonnes of diesel for fuel and two extra ICRC delegates bringing the number of sanitation engineers so far sent to Baghdad to 11 and the total number of ICRC delegates to 40.

He explained that there were only two working sanitation lines left in Baghdad and that efforts are underway to try and repair others as well as fixing generators in the electricity-deprived city.

The convoy, according to the ICRC spokesman, is carrying three extra sanitation lines, generators and spare parts.

Mr. Schroeder said the shipment of food, approved by the United Nations Sanctions Committee, will be placed at the disposal of the ICRC delegation in Baghdad and "is intended for the civilian population there." He added that the relief was being sent to Baghdad as "part of the humanitarian law under the Geneva convention which supercedes the Sanctions Committee."

"As a relief organisation we give prevalence to the Geneva convention which was adopted by all states," Mr. Schroeder said.

Doctors from the Paris-based medical relief group Medecins Sans Frontieres returned from Baghdad on Friday, saying more Iraqi children could die unless health conditions improve soon.

They spoke of malnutrition among children, deaths from intestinal disease and mothers and infants dying in childbirth. Iraq said this week typhoid and cholera were spreading in the country and appealed for urgent medical supplies.

Water and sewage systems were smashed by allied bombing and many residents are taking water from the polluted Tigris River. The World Health Organisation says Baghdad's main water supply is providing five per cent of its pre-war level.

Aid agencies are worried epidemics could break out once the weather warms, normally by the end of March.

In the midst of much anxiety about the spread of epidemics in Iraq, Risho Kosei-kai (Japanese Buddhist organisation) is sending emergency supplies worth \$150,000 to children and mothers in Iraq. The convoy will leave Amman on Sunday, March 17. The food and medical supplies will be transported by the Jordanian Red Crescent Society and will be distributed by the Iraq Red Crescent Society. The shipment includes powdered milk (20 tonnes), wheat flour (30 tonnes), 3 generators, and essential drugs and medical equipment such as sutures.

Amman to send relief team to help rebuild Baghdad

AMMAN (J.T.) — Greater Amman Municipality is sending machinery, technicians, tents and doctors to Iraq to help the country cope with the immense task of returning to normal life following the devastating war Greater Amman Mayor Ali Suheimat announced Saturday.

"Based on a principle of brotherhood and friendship and in the light of the sufferings of the Iraqi people and their need to get aid to overcome the present difficulties, the Greater Amman Municipality has decided to send to Baghdad several pieces of machinery and their crews to help remove the debris in the process of reconstruction," said Suheimat in his announcement.

He said that machinery and equipment needed to combat pests and rodents and vehicles to carry away waste will be sent to Baghdad soon following coordination in this matter with the concerned authorities in the two countries.

Mr. Suheimat said that the municipality's staff members to

accompany the machinery and equipment will carry their own tents and beds, water, tankers to carry drinking water and fuel, and will be accompanied by ambulances and doctors to stay with them throughout the duration of the task; the total cost of these operations will be covered by the municipality.

He said that the crew would be carrying food sufficient for a whole month.

Mr. Suheimat also said that Greater Amman Municipality would soon be launching a campaign to enlist the help of other cities in Arab and foreign countries in helping Baghdad and other cities in the process of removing rubble and in reconstruction work.

The mayor made the announcement during the municipal council's ordinary session which endorsed several matters and reports.

According to municipality officials, the council approved of several recommendations related

to numbering of streets in Amman and endorsed proposals concerning sub-committees' work.

The mayor's announcement coincided with news about further shipments of food and medical supplies being sent to Baghdad to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The latest convoy sent by Jordanian citizens, was the one that left Tafleeh Saturday.

According to Tafleeh's Mayor Suleiman Hureishat, the convoy of five trucks carried 80 tonnes of food supplies donated by the Tafleeh people.

A spokesman for a national committee collecting contributions and donations for Iraq, which organised the shipment, announced that the committee was going ahead with its own programme of sending contributions raised from Jordanian citizens. These contributions are in addition to those organised by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other humanitarian organisations.

CBJ

(Continued from page 1)

He admitted that some importers were hurt and that the cash margin was not the right weapon to curb imports and save foreign currency, but it was the best choice despite the opposition raised by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which was advocating "free trade."

Dr. Nabulsi asked the businessmen what action could the CBJ have taken when foreign currency reserves dried up a few years ago. He went on to remind his audience of the days when banks sent their clients to the black market to fetch dollars for their imports.

The governor, however, was quick to reassure the meeting that foreign currency reserves were now at their highest level ever and that the financial situation of the Kingdom was very solid although some of the benefits have come from reduced imports and the stoppage of loan repayments.

Furthermore, the situation has improved for the inward remit-

ances of foreign currency due to the regaining of the climate of stability and security which the governor credited for about \$1 billion in foreign currency deposits in banks in Jordan.

Linking the cash margin on L/Cs to the ceiling on overdrafts or advances under current account of 20 per cent of total credit facilities, Dr. Nabulsi said it was a defeat of purpose if both were raised because the aim was to limit credit extension in overdrafts.

Dr. Nabulsi said overdrafts or advances under current accounts were the worst type of lending because it does not provide for a repayment date and gives the borrower "no sense of indebtedness."

He pointed out that this type of lending had shown a state of inactivity at all lending banks, a situation which runs contradictory to what such a facility should be.

Dr. Nabulsi estimated that 50 per cent of all bank lending in overdrafts or advances under current accounts were unproductive and can be considered doubtful assets for banks.

He further blamed this category of lending as a major cause for the financial catastrophe of the recent past.

Dr. Nabulsi criticised banks and said that they had not made adequate cover for bad debts. The governor did not find a problem on export letters of credit regarding the exchange rate which banks calculate for the 90 per cent of the revenue on export earnings.

Dr. Nabulsi said the buy/sell exchange rate was a minimal complaint by the exporters noting that the supply of foreign currency whenever needed by them largely offsets a small loss, if any, and was more important if past situations were to be looked at.

Dr. Nabulsi elaborated that the CBJ was granting greater facilities to banks than ever before (excluding those given to Petra Bank) but that the CBJ cannot interfere in any bilateral relation between a bank and a client.

Citing an example, the governor mentioned receiving petitions from parliamentarians to examine sour relations between commercial banks and some debtors.

Queen inaugurates project

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday inaugurated the Zai rabbit production project, an income-generating project that benefits 200 women in the rural areas of Zai and Allan, near Salt.

The project is the latest self-employment small-scale enterprise to be implemented in Jordan by Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) Women and Development Programme (WDP) with financing from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA).

The Queen was briefed on the stages of the projects which is designed to involve rural women in socio-economic development programmes. She toured the various units, the slaughter house and the animal feed sections.

The project has been set up on an eight dunum piece of land which the Ministry of Agriculture's Forestry Department allowed the Noor Al Hussein Foundation to use for the project and a centre to run it.

The scheme is to be carried out in cooperation with the Zai and Allan women's association, according to a foundation official.

He said that up to 200 women would participate in the scheme, raising the rabbits in their homes and benefiting from the centre's services in training, technical assistance as well as marketing.

NHF said that the overall objective of the project was to enhance fuller integration, participation and representation of Jordanian women in the country's socio-economic development.

The project seeks to accomplish its objective through training the participants in the necessary skills to set up, manage and run productive schemes and to produce, control supervise and market the products, NHF said.

It said that the rabbit-raising project was selected in view of the economic return of this domestic animal: high protein, nutritious and healthy meat as well as furs that can be used in the

manufacture of articles of clothing, footwear and toys as well as droppings that can be used as fertilisers.

The scheme is expected to help increase the protein intake of family members in the rural as well as urban regions, especially children in low-income communities, NHF said.

According to NHF, the centre has the capacity to house 60 rabbits all of meat producing families, altogether producing up to 1,800 rabbits annually.

Following the official inauguration, the Queen visited one of the women participants at home and met members of the Zai and Allan women's association.

Later the Queen visited the local secondary school for girls. She was accompanied on the tour by Princess Alia Al Faisal, NHF director general and other officials, including Minister of Agriculture Mohammad Alawneh and Upper House of Parliament Member Mrs. Laila Sharaf.



Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein Saturday looks at a rabbit at the Zai rabbit breeding project (George — Crystal)

Reelected lawyer says his popularity is due to the bar's policies rather than to himself

Bar association elects president

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan Bar Association President Walid Abdul Hadi, who was elected for a new two-year term Friday, says that the bar would adhere to the same policies adopted over the past two years and would continue to extend moral and material support to the Palestinian and Iraqi people.

Mr. Walid Abdul Hadi told the Jordan Times that his winning the presidency with a landslide victory reflected a majority support for the bar's policies rather than for his own person in view of the efforts the bar council had exerted in rallying support for the Iraqi people during the Gulf crisis.

"Our support for the Iraqi people in all forms and ways will continue, and we highly appreciate the heroic stand adopted by the Iraqi people and the armed forces in confronting the aggression which was tantamount to a third world war," Mr. Abdul Hadi said.

The bar president, who belongs to the Jordan Arab National Democratic Front (JANDF) secured 67 votes while his main rival, Zuhair Abul Ragheb, who represented the Islamic Bloc, got 384 votes.

"The war on Iraq has exposed the real nature of certain Arab



Walid Abdul Hadi

regimes and proved beyond a shed of doubt that only through unity can the Arab World muster its own destiny," said Mr. Abdul Hadi.

"Our blue and the Bar Association pledge to maintain assistance and help in every possible way to the Palestinian people and support their uprising against occupation," Mr. Abdul Hadi added.

Mr. Abdul Hadi's success to the post was seen as the first real victory by JANDF at the professional unions level.

A total of 898 lawyers, out of a registered number of 1,658, took

part in the election held at the Professional Association Complex Friday. Nearly 275 lawyers came from the occupied West Bank, according to Bar Association sources.

A third candidate running for the presidency was Omar Damra who received only 63 votes.

Out of a total of 26 candidates, running for the bar council, the following were elected: Mazen Ershaidat, Samir Khirfan, Adib Hawatmeh, Zuhdi Al Disi, Mohammad Rushdan, Kamal Naser, Mohammad Naimi, Ahmad Abul Samen, Ziyad Khawaneh and Waddah Haddad.

Although 170 of the Jordanian lawyers were women, none ran for the council or for presidency.

One of the lawyers who voted in the election was Samir Al Tal who came from Irbid for the event. Mr. Tal said he was deeply satisfied to see the election taking place in a democratic atmosphere reflecting the country's democratic climate.

Mr. Tal said that the Bar Association groups a wide sector of Jordanian intellectuals and therefore it assumes a significant role in Jordan's political life.

He said all the Jordanian lawyers agreed on the need for the new bar council to help promote the profession through reforms, to be introduced in the association's regulations and laws.

JNRC delegation returns from Iraq

AMMAN (J.T.) — A delegation representing the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) has returned to Amman following a visit to Iraq and talks with officials from the Iraqi National Red Crescent Society headed by the society's President Ibrahim Al Nouri.

The head of the delegation, Mohammad Al Hadid, said that questions related to facilitating the arrival and distribution of relief supplies in Iraq were discussed at the meetings. Matters related to cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and other humanitarian organisations were also discussed.

Mr. Hadid said that his team carried 115 tonnes of medicine, medical equipment and food supplies to Iraq during the visit.

He said that the Iraqis were in need of huge amounts of medicine and food supplies due to the shortage caused by the sanctions

imposed on Iraq.

He also said that there was fear of epidemics resulting from the lack of pure potable water and

sewerage services. He said that he toured various parts of the Iraqi capital and examined the health situation there.

MCBURGER RESTAURANT / IRBID

On the occasion of the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan **McBurger Restaurant** announces the opening of its new branch in the city of Irbid and pledges to its customers its commitment to

GOOD QUALITY, CLEAN AND QUICK SERVICE

★ Daily iftar meals for special prices★
For reservation, due to the limited capacity of the restaurant,
please call tel. 240873 or 277901
Irbid-Shafiq Irshaidat Street, near Al Arabi Club premises

Baker

(Continued from page 1)

in the attacks. The explosion in Ankara hit a Turkish bank, Interbank. Although the bank was Turkish, its name might have misled the attackers, officials said.

Dev Sol (Revolutionary Left), an underground group, claimed responsibility for the attacks.

An anonymous caller to the daily Cumhuriyet in Istanbul said the attacks were staged to wel-

come Baker who was on a tour to divide the Middle East following a bloody massacre in the region.

Dev Sol has claimed responsibility for at least 15 other bombings in recent months.

In one of the attacks last month, Dev Sol shot and killed an American employed at Incirlik. Dev Sol also wounded an American officer in Izmir in February.

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Road begins here

IRAQI President Saddam Hussein's speech yesterday sheds light on his country's state of affairs in the aftermath of the Gulf war, especially on the reconstruction of Iraq both politically and economically. It was, in a sense, an overdue speech since the country has also been living in a state of uncertainty due to the rebellion in northern and southern Iraq. President Hussein pointed the finger point blank at Iran even though he did not name it as having played a devious role in fomenting the strife. In retrospect, the revelation that Tehran was involved in helping the rebellion in southern Iraq must have come as a shock to Iraqis and other Arab states which became encouraged by the rapprochement between Iraq and Iran at the conclusion of their eight-year war. The warming of bilateral relations between them in recent times gave all Arabs much hope that Iran and the Arab World are once again on the right track. The future looked bright between the two nations and many Arab countries proceeded full speed to construct even more on the friendship that was taking root between Iran and the Arab World. In this context, the dismay of Iraq in Iran's efforts to undermine the war-torn nation and threaten its territorial integrity and independence will, for sure, cause consternation and disappointment across the Arab World as well.

And what is going on in the north of Iraq also alarms Arabs everywhere. The ongoing attempts to stir the Iraqi Kurds into a rebellion can only drive a deeper wedge between Iraq and its neighbours. Surely the instigators of the insurrection in the north are in the same boat with the promoters of the rebellion in the south since the end result is to threaten the territorial integrity of Iraq, something that all Arabs, and the international community as a whole, whether friends or foes of the Iraqi regime, should fight. In this vein, the Arab governments are called upon to serve Iraq's neighbours with clear notice that they will not tolerate any infringement on Iraq's independence and sovereignty.

At a time when Baghdad is trying hard to make a good beginning and start fresh, it is most disturbing that conspiracies against it are still being hatched right and left. Having committed itself to the process of democratisation, all the capitals of the world should now lead Iraq a helping hand to heal its wounds and embark on the new road of democracy and parliamentary system of government. Saddam Hussein pledged yesterday to build a democratic society in his country: "Our decision to build a democratic society based on the constitution, the rule of law and political pluralism is a decisive, irrevocable decision," he told his people. "It is time to start building the pillar of the new faith," he stressed. The Iraqi president must be held accountable to this pledge which in the final analysis is more far-reaching and effective than all the other commitments he made to the international community including those made to the U.N. Security Council.

It is regrettable that Iraq had not moved in that direction before the catastrophic war occurred. Jordan has always called for the promotion and spread of democracy across the Arab World as the best guarantee against ill-conceived state decisions. If Baghdad is now on the road to democracy, it deserves all the support it can get from the community of nations including those which destroyed it. Iraq deserves a chance to restructure and reconstruct itself in every dimension. The world owes it to Iraq to give it that chance.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

PRESIDENT Bush did not give details to explain his idea of "common position" which, he said, he had reached with President Mitterrand on the Middle East issue, said Al Rai Arabic daily Saturday. It is strange to hear Bush saying this at a time when he realises that the Palestinian people's rights in their homeland cannot be compromised in any way and that U.N. Security Council resolutions must be implemented at all costs, said the paper. Any move to deprive the Palestinians of their rights can neither be considered as a "common position" nor a just solution for their problem, the paper noted. One should remind the presidents of France and the USA that international legitimacy does not tolerate double standard dealings, and that any solution that does not take into account the full rights of the Palestinian people in their homeland can only be described as a form of deception, the paper noted. It said that by adopting a "common position" or a "compromise," the U.S. can by no means absolve itself from the responsibility of the great sufferings of the Palestinian people. The paper stressed that any solution for the Palestine problem should entail Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab lands in implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. It said that the future of the Palestinian people themselves can and should be determined by that people without foreign interference.

It is not easy for anyone in the Arab region to be convinced of the American moves to find a just solution to the Palestine problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict because Bush continues to reject the idea of an international conference that could provide the mechanism to solve these issues, said Sawt Al Shaab Arabic daily Saturday. The paper noted that the United States continues to reject PLO participation and continues to oppose European Community views with regard to the essential implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. The outcome of the Bush-Mitterrand meeting and the visit to Moscow by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker showed clearly that the U.S. administration is not serious about the establishment of a just and durable peace based on international legitimacy, the paper noted. It said Bush's latest statements about the Middle East have now come under suspicion specially as Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Shafir rejected them. It seems that Bush is trying to persuade the Soviets and the French into accepting the idea of forcing the Arabs into accepting the U.S.-Israeli formula to settle the issue, the paper added.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Jordan's economy beyond the Gulf war

IF the movement of prices in the stock exchange were to be used as an indication of the business mood in the country, then the future of the Jordanian economy must be extremely bright. Share prices were jumping daily. Around 18 per cent net rise was achieved during the first two weeks of this month. Dealers at the stock market may be over-reacting, and the euphoria may not be fully justified, but the future must be promising.

Market signals are by no means perfect, but they are telling. The expectations in the business community are very high and there must be some good reasons for that.

People are happy that the war is over. The Israeli threat is no more likely, at least for the time being. The government budget and the Central Bank balance sheet are in good shape. Even the heavy external indebtedness is no more worrying, because people started to think that its write-off is a matter of time, and the creditors are now in the mood to forgive and forget debts that cannot realistically be repaid neither now nor in the future.

The only drawback is the negative signals coming from the governments of the Gulf states which suggest that they want to settle political accounts. Saudi Arabia is reportedly denying Royal

Jordanian airplanes the right of innocent passage through their airspace. Jordanian drivers are still waiting in vain for their visas to drive their trucks to the Saudi and other Gulf markets.

But these negative signals are believed, or hoped, to be of temporary nature. It is not reasonable for Saudi Arabia to continue closing its airspace in the face of Jordanian air traffic while Saudi flights are overflying Jordanian airspace daily. It is equally unreasonable to block entry visas requested by Jordanian nationals while Saudis are welcomed in Jordan without even having to obtain a visa. And it is not conceivable that Jordan will continue to allow transit for traffic from Syria, Lebanon and Turkey to the Gulf states through its territories while Jordanian transit activity is at a standstill.

Normalisation of relations is believed to be a matter of time. Financial aid, however, will not be expected soon, but it is definitely not written off for ever. It is in the Saudi self-interest to keep Jordan safe and sound militarily and economically as a buffer zone separating Saudi Arabia from the Israeli war machine. Saudi Arabia cannot count on America to fight an Israeli threat on its behalf as it did against Iraq. The Jordanian military budget is on average no more than 2 per cent of the

inflated budget of the Saudi military.

Finally, Jordan is using the democracy weapon very effectively. Democracy secured unlimited legitimacy and popularity to the Jordanian regime, along with the political stability that goes with it. The world is coming to the side of Jordan financially, especially Europe and Japan, because of what Jordan stands for in the Middle East.

As of now, the decline in Jordanian economy resulting from the Gulf crisis has bottomed off. Recovery started, and the economy is ready to take off. The Gulf states that appear to be rather problematic need Jordan more than Jordan needs them. They will eventually find that it is in their own interest to cooperate with Jordan. On the other hand Iraq could not be ignored as an economic, political, and military power in the Middle East. The economic integration of the Jordanian and Iraqi economies over the past 10 years will continue to give fruitful results as soon as the sanctions are removed.

Jordan will continue to need foreign aid for the coming years. There is no reason to fear that such aid will not be forthcoming to a democratic, stable and highly visible and respectable country.

Unless West's ignorance of Arab grievances is corrected, conflicts, wars will persist

By Dr. Fadia Faqir

WHILE western countries are still celebrating their victory over Iraq, millions of Arabs feel deep hatred and anger over what they call a "colonial flexing of technological muscles." This resentment of the Arab masses which has swept North African countries, Yemen, Jordan, and Palestine can be understood if placed in the context of imperialism, the resurgence of Islam and the reaction of the misrepresented and abused. Most of these Arabs feel that their countries are ruled by westernised puppets, their economies controlled by the International Monetary Fund and their reality misrepresented by the western mass media. Western countries, they argue, who have consistently tried to penetrate the developing world for political and economic reasons, monopolise the systems of representation. The conflict or quest for oil, territorial expansionism, and the western multinational corporations bid for hegemony helped produce and sustain a body of knowledge in which the opposition is portrayed as ignorant, backward and evil, thus justifying yet another U.S. military adventure, so-called "Operation Desert Storm."

During the Gulf war, anti-American feelings reached unprecedented levels in Jordan and many other Arab countries. The vast majority of the 3.1 million people in Jordan were united in their show of active support for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. At one point, the Jordanian people, on an average per capita wage of £62 a month, managed to raise £17,000 for Iraq in one day. The number of those who signed up for the popular army of Iraq was about 200,000, 150,000 of whom received basic military training to defend Iraq and the "New Jordan," and among them many members of Parliament. On this issue, and for the first time in Jordan's history, the government and the nationalist, leftist and Islamic movements were united in their opposition to the West.

At this sombre moment in history, when half a million American soldiers are lined up against an Arab country, the majority of the Arab masses feel that they have to prioritise sovereignty over democracy. They feel that the sovereignty of the whole region, including "liberated" Kuwait is under threat. While the West viewed the conflict as justified international campaign to stop a repressive dictator, those in the Arab World who sympathised with Saddam saw the main issue as Arab sovereignty. If the Arab World's will is dictated by foreign domination, there will be no democracy, they argued. This dilemma which faced the Arab masses was resolved by supporting the Iraqi leader — himself hardly a paragon of democracy — in his confrontation with the West. The struggle for democracy will be futile without challenging U.S. hegemony in the Arab World and asserting Arab sovereignty.

American military intervention on behalf of cheap fuel and "American values" is seen to be part of "operation neo-colonialism" by the Arab street. The occupation of southern Iraq provided the Arab masses with concrete evidence that the allied plan is to subjugate and coerce the Arabs. The return of the western forces have brought back disturbing memories. The U.S. marines remind the Arabs of the American adventure in Beirut in 1982-83. Similarly, the return of the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars 48 years after Montgomery defeated Rommel, when the Desert Rats were part of an occupying colonial force, only served to resurrect a colonial past. The Monties and Glubb Pasha's are back, the Sykes and the Picots, only this time they are wearing blue jeans and "Saddam Busters" t-shirts and lack the romanticism of their ancestors. Arabs braced themselves for yet another broken promise, another betrayal, which would be presented in the West as "a triumph."

Islamic groups and parties, exploiting this general feeling of frustration, stirred up another set of associations reminiscent of the holy wars of the past. It was a new crusade against the Muslim Arabs, and "even with or without oil," argued a Muslim fundamentalist, "the Crusaders would have invaded us for the simple fact that we are Muslims and they are Christians." They find Islam, with its active support of jihad, threatening and aim to suppress "our Islamic renaissance." In a recent talk in Amman, Mohammad Al Ghazali, an Egyptian religious leader, reminded a mainly fun-

"The conflict between Arab nationalism which calls for the unification of the Arab World, the democratisation of Arab states and the nationalisation of its wealth and resources — the conflict between this ideology and the interests of the United States in the region has never been more evident. The U.S. has strived to maintain the status quo in the Middle East through military alliances and by supporting certain regimes which have stifled political opposition and internal dissension."

damentalist audience of the exploits of the Muslim Saladin who drove the Crusaders out of the Arab World. In 1187, Saladin, addressing his Muslim cavalry, proclaimed that "the Muslim army must confront all the infidels in an organised battle. We must throw ourselves resolutely into the jihad." Eight hundred years have passed and yet, in the eyes of the fundamentalist, Al-Faraj, the Franks are still the same. They still want to occupy the land of Islam and "free" Jerusalem.

The Arab nationalists had yet another perspective. With reference to a more recent past, they saw the conflict in the Gulf as an imperialist invasion of the Arab World under the united command of the USA. The ideology of pan-Arabism which shaped the politics of the 50s and 60s in the Arab World, and reached its zenith with the unification of Egypt and Syria in 1958, has proved to be alive and kicking in the present crisis. This ideology, which is essentially anti-imperialist, was revived — some would argue even saved — by the war in the Gulf. While the West sees the invasion of Kuwait as a naked act of aggression against an independent, sovereign Arab state, many Arabs, who are brought up to believe in one Arab homeland, have little respect for the dotted lines, the arbitrary borders superimposed on them by the colonial powers. Within this context, territorial concessions are seen as the norm — the invasion is seen as one more step towards the realisation of a united, and many would hope democratic, Arab homeland.

The conflict between Arab nationalism which calls for the unification of the Arab World, the democratisation of Arab states and the nationalisation of its wealth and resources —

the conflict between this ideology and the interests of the United States in the region has never been more evident. The U.S. has strived to maintain the status quo in the Middle East through military alliances and by supporting certain regimes which have stifled political opposition and internal dissension. Forty-four per cent of the world's oil is owned by six ruling families. For the U.S. and the industrialised world as a whole, it is easier to negotiate oil prices with a ruling minority than with a truly elected parliament. Arab nationalists believe that any movement towards democratisation in the Arab World is observed with concern, and is seen as a threat to western interests in the area.

But perhaps the most common reading of the Gulf war comes from the slums and Palestinian refugee camps of the Arab World. For the dwellers of the "cities of the dead," the war is a conflict between those who have, and those who have not. The poor of Jordan, like many other disadvantaged Arab groups, took to the streets because they hoped that this conflict would bring greater economic equality to the region. In the past few years Jordan, the island of relative freedom, prosperity and stability (to borrow Malise Ruthven's words), has turned into a wasteland, a dump for hopes and aspirations. It is struggling to pay the interest on its \$8.4 billion foreign debt, thirty per cent of its population live under the poverty line (\$135 a month per household), and one-third of its population are unemployed.

With an inflation rate running at one hundred per cent, men and women work unfulfilled hours for little reward. "We sell our merchandise and get air in return. We actually live on air," a Jordanian salesman said. If you were second-hand

European clothes, eat food rejected by western countries, and live in a shack then you are living on very little. A whole nation dreams of books and computers, and working in far-away places where people are richer and happier.

While waiting for the dream to come true, Jordanians see, read and hear about the standards of living enjoyed by western countries and about the obscene way some of the oil rich Arabs spend their money. When thousands of talented students cannot afford to continue their education and read in the local press about birthday parties in California for Saudi cats which cost thousands of dollars, it has an effect. Regardless of the truth of these reports, they feel angry and bitter. The Kuwaiti minister to the GCC said that the Iraqis saw a paradise and decided to loot it. It is no longer possible to have a consumer paradise right next to a country with \$60 billion worth of foreign debt and expect peace and harmony to last. The Arab dwellers of shanty towns have burnt the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack in reaction to the pressure exerted on them and their economies by the London and Paris clubs and to show their disgust at the squandering of petrodollars.

A final reason for the anger and bitterness, which all Islamic, nationalist or leftist parties, regardless of their priorities or ideologies, agree on, is the western mass media's misrepresentation of Arab individuals and culture. Watching the images on their television screens, brought to their homes by the development of communications, Arabs fail to recognise the truth of their experience in the western media's representation of it. They feel out-numbered and out-organised by a western culture which validates and enforces the supremacy of everything that is Judeo-Christian, western, white, and written. In many broadcasts aimed at a western audience, Arabs are presented as either ignorant and idle rich desert nomads or mindless terrorists. While in the East, Arabs watch and listen to the western mass media constantly deforming or falsifying their reality, Arabs watch themselves being herded together and subjected to a monolithic reductionism by journalists and commentators

ignorant of the differences within Islam and between Arab countries.

Many in the West, apparently unaware of the social and political changes which have taken place in the Middle East in the past decades, aggravate the situation by talking down to Arabs, who are trying to come to terms with new realities and who feel frustrated and targeted. A Jordanian, complaining about the western media said, "they come in like an army... and they know it all before they come. They don't listen; they tell us what we ought to be doing." Most Arabs have had enough of being patronised by stern headmasters from London or Washington. The Arab countries see themselves as thirty years old or more, like individuals who are thirty something, they demand respect and understanding.

Furthermore, most Arabs see the support of many in the West for the Gulf war as hatred for Arabs and Islam. How else, they argue, would you interpret the demonisation not only of Saddam Hussein himself, but of his entire population? How else would you interpret the American military sense of "comfort" that followed the bombardment of Al Amiriyah air shelter? How else would you interpret this silence over the softening up of Saddam's retreating military machine, which killed many fleeing Iraqis — "very, very many" bereaved families of peasant boys?

The grievances I listed above do not exist in isolation, but are interconnected and feed on each other to form a complex web of demands and aspirations across the Arab World. Unless the West attempts to combat its ignorance of the Arabs, their history and culture, the bridges between the Arab World and the West will remain forever destroyed. The reductionism of the Arabs and Islam has to stop, the representation of their culture has to be contextualised, their dehumanisation challenged, or the catastrophic Gulf war will be followed by others in which further acts of horrific violence might be committed against a backward, ignorant and reduced enemy.

Dr. Fadia Faqir, a Jordanian and a novelist, teaches at Exeter University in England. She contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

Iran exploiting Iraq's internal situation

By Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

A top-secret "command memorandum" dated March 4 ordered Iran's Revolutionary Guards for the first time to give full military support to "cross-border activities" against Saddam Hussein by Iraqi dissidents who sought political asylum in Iran during the Iran-Iraq war and are still based there.

Behind this interventionist decision by the legates of the late Ayatollah Khomeini lies the epicentre of a political earthquake rumbling through the land of fundamentalist mullahs since the Gulf war started.

The apparent aim of the ayatollahs is an event feared by President Bush: destabilise defeated Iraq and replace it with Iran as the Gulf's preeminent power. "There definitely is a

stirring of the pot, (and) no one knows how it will turn out," an administration insider told us. To Bush and his advisers, Iran-style Shi'ite fundamentalism is a dangerous threat.

The March 4 order went to all local commanders in newly supplied Revolutionary Guard bases along the entire Iran-Iraq border. Cancelling a Jan. 23 order that barred Iran-backed military operations against Iraq during the Gulf conflict, it stated that "all support necessary" should now be given to military and political "cross-border activities." The guards' commander, Brig. Gen. Kamal Hedayat, signed it.

The American-led, anti-Saddam coalition maintained solid cohesion during the six-month military buildup and the short, explosive war that began in mid-January. But with victory

came division. Backed strongly by non-coalition member Israel, both Saudi Arabia and Egypt thought Saddam should be destroyed before the war ended.

But Bush, supported by Britain and France, worried more about Iraq's stability than the personal fate of Saddam, despite his repeated attacks on the Iraqi president as "worse than Hitler." Bush's worry was wisely based on Western fears that a destabilised Iraq, almost defenceless and wracked by civil war, would inevitably lead to a destabilised Gulf. The probable elevation of Iran, by far the largest Gulf power, would naturally follow.

Iran regards the Gulf as its own. Its ayatollahs want to control the Islamic holy places in Saudi Arabia's Mecca and Medina and in Iraq's Najaf and Karbala. Thus a resurgent Iran

would pose a threat to U.S. and western interests, not limited to oil, surpassing last summer's threat when Saddam seized Kuwait.

Iran's president, Hashemi Rafsanjani, remained something of an enigma to the United States while he gathered most of Khomeini's power into his own hands. Now, however, administration officials worry that they may have been wrong about early signs that he is a "moderate," the political brand impossible to find during the Iran-contra scandal. Intelligence specialists here say the order to the Revolutionary Guards came only with his express approval.

Indeed, Rafsanjani quietly went this week to a key guard base near Kermanshah called the Ramazan Garrison, a principal kickoff point for subversive border crossings by Iraqi

dissidents and Revolutionary Guards. The ostensible reason: to study "reconstruction" projects. The more likely reason was to hear reports about stepped-up operations across the border.

Once inside Iraq, armed with weapons, food and one blanket each, these fighters operate as irregulars. A key target is the so-called National Liberation Army of Iran, formed four years ago by anti-fundamentalist Iranian expatriates. The NLA is the sworn enemy of the mullahs. It operates with Saddam's support from bases inside Iraq. Last Monday an NLA unit was intercepted by the guards near the border but in Iraq. There were 150 casualties in the ensuing firefight.

But Iran's real target must extend beyond the NLA. Rafsanjani, the self-styled Gulf

war peace seeker, suddenly denounced Saddam last week and demanded he quit. Playing to the majority Shi'ites in southern Iraq, where Khomeini plotted to build an Iraqi Shi'ite republic, Rafsanjani said in Tehran that "a truly popular (anti-Saddam) movement" was spreading from the Shi'ite south to the Kurdish north.

The Iranian leader is clearly worried that Turkey's overtures to large Kurdish minorities in Turkey and Iraq will stir up Iran's own huge Kurdish minority. Nevertheless, his objective may be to split Iraq in three: Baghdad and western Iraq, controlled by successors to Saddam; a Kurdish north; and a Shi'ite south tied to Tehran.

That is a chilling prospect as militant guards penetrate an Iraq already in civil chaos — The Washington Post.

Saddam

(Continued from page 1)

He denounced rebels as traitors, saying they were trying to dismember and destroy Iraq, leading it into the "dark tunnel" of Lebanon-style sectarian and factional strife.

"We have crushed the disturbances in the cities of the south," President Saddam said.

"With the determination of the people and the cooperation of good, sincere people all over Iraq we can pick out what is left of the roots of treason and sabotage."

"The best of our people, of the army and the security forces were able within a few days to crush this hateful discord."

"Many traitors have been smashed and many have fled back where they came from."

President Saddam addressed much of his speech to the Kurds, about 20 per cent of Iraq's 17 million people. He denied they were traitors and insisted that the Baath Party government had always tried to unite the country across religious and ethnic divides.

He said the revolt in the north was fomented by the same people who backed Mulla Mustafa Barazani's unsuccessful 1970-75 bid to create an independent Kurdish state.

"They are repeating the same fatal error and the same treachery... their fate will be the same as those that came before," he said.

"I warn these reckless adventurers in the name of the Iraqi leadership, I tell them: 'Do not have illusions because Iraq, despite the losses caused by aggression, will with God's help be able to deal... with those who exploit the country's plight.'"

"Our Kurdish people must remember basic facts. What those adventurers and traitors seek will never be achieved... Kurds are present in even larger numbers in Turkey, Iran, Syria and the Soviet Union. These countries will not allow it."

"It has become clearly evident the source of the infiltration plan in the south and north is one and same, with one purpose, which is to destroy and divide Iraq and spread confusion, damage and destruction, and to subjugate Iraq to the will of the foreigner," he said.

"Those who infiltrated to the north, are trying to picture their perfidious acts as a service to Iraq... I would like to remind them, especially the Kurds of the north, of the experience of the past 30 years. I would like to remind you that all Kurdish movements had connections with the foreigner, or depended on him for political military and material support, but they only achieved losses and destructions for our Kurdish citizens."

"The greedy foreigners support the rebellion and insurgency only to weaken Iraq and weaken Iraq's armed forces in order to serve their own objectives and Israeli purposes... the rights of the Kurds and their interests, dignity and security... cannot be achieved by being a lackey of the foreigner."

He said that while Iraqi cities were still scarred by war traumas carrying forged identity papers infiltrated the country to spread destruction and terror.

He named cities in Basra, Amara, Nassiriya, Karbala, Najaf and Hilla, all in the Shiite south, as centres of the troubles.

"They attacked isolated barracks and retreating army units, and captured arms and equipment. They burned the people's property... killed state and party officials, army officers and civilians," President Saddam said.

Iraq's enemies, he said, described what had happened as a "popular uprising against the regime and a serious attempt to change it."

"No attempt to change the system of government in a country at war with foreign forces... can call itself patriotic," he said.

"We have to exercise strong will and determination to protect Iraq from this discord... and restore security, stability and order."

Promising to move quickly to implement pre-war pledges of reform, President Saddam said: "Our decision to build a democratic society based on the constitution, the rule of law and political pluralism is a decisive, irrevocable decision."

"Dear Iraqis," he said, "it is time to start building the pillar of the new faith, in spite of all the difficulties."

He promised a referendum on the new constitution and a major government shake-up to rebuild the country.

President Saddam vowed to keep pressing the Palestinian cause. He said failure to solve it was still the reason for instability in the Middle East.

"A solution that does not recognise the full rights of this struggling people will be no solution. Wise men should recognise this fact if they seek security, stability

and a permanent peace in the region."

President Saddam also reiterated Iraqi support for Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Mr. Arafat has come under fire from other Arab governments for supporting Iraq during the Gulf crisis.

President Saddam reiterated Iraq's readiness for good relations with its neighbours, "based on non-interference in the internal affairs of the countries of the region."

Kurdish rebels Saturday claimed to be in control of the northern oil industry city of Mosul, and that thousands of army defectors were fighting on their side.

The city of Kut, southeast of Baghdad, was taken by rebel forces Saturday, the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq claimed.

The Iraqi government Saturday extended for the second time the deadline on its amnesty for deserters, giving them until March 19 to report to their units. The previous deadline was March 15.

Iran urged President Saddam's government Saturday to "surrender to the will of the people" and issued a warning to it about Shiite Muslim shrines at Najaf and Karbala, Iranian Television said.

The television, reporting on a meeting of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, did not specify the nature of the warning about the shrines.

"The violation of the sanctity of the holy sites in Najaf and Karbala was condemned and a warning was issued to the Iraqi government in that respect," the television said.

Rebel groups have accused government troops of shelling Najaf and Karbala. They reported damage to the gold domes of the Karbala shrines of Hussein, the Prophet Mohammad's grandson and the third Shiite imam, and his brother Abbas.

The council, which met under the chairmanship of President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, rejected suggestions that Iran was intervening in the revolt.

"The council expressed extreme concern over the extensive massacre of the people in Iraq by the government forces," it said.

"Iran, whilst continuing its humanitarian aid, regards the current events... as an irredeemable blow to Iraq, and... considers the surrender of the Iraqi government to the will of the nation and the consensus of the people, to be the only way to save Iraq."

Chemicals

(Continued from page 1)

"There isn't one formula yet and I don't think there will be a single formula until a lot more consultations have taken place," he said, making clear he didn't feel the time was right for an international Mideast peace conference.

The British are more closely aligned to U.S. positions on how to bring lasting peace to the Middle East than the French or Canadians.

Mr. Bush said Secretary of State James Baker II, who just left Moscow, reported that the Soviets "still wanted to play a constructive role" in the region.

Mr. Bush and Mr. Major, meeting for the second time since Mr. Major succeeded Margaret Thatcher, also were to discuss European unity, turmoil inside the Soviet Union and whether to lift sanctions against South Africa.

In other developments: — Iraqi soldiers were innocent in one of the most often cited atrocities of the Gulf war, leaving premature Kuwaiti babies to die by taking away their incubators, an American television network reported.

ABC quoted the director of Kuwait's primary health care system, Dr. Mohammad Matar, and his wife, Dr. Fayeza Yousef, who ran a maternity hospital as saying the 312 babies died because no one stayed to care for them.

President Bush frequently cited the infants' deaths as an example of what he said was Iraq's brutal treatment of innocent Kuwaitis.

"No, they didn't take them away from the incubator," Dr. Yousef told the television network. "To tell the truth, there was no service, no nurses to take care of these babies, and that's why they died."

Dr. Matar said the widespread reports about the babies were "just for propaganda."

They said that patients in the hospitals died because hospital workers fled the country after the Aug. 2 Iraqi invasion.

The Red Crescent Society, originally reported the atrocity after finding the babies dead and their incubators missing.

But the society now said that the medical records of how the babies died have been destroyed and ABC said the incubators had been found, locked away in storage rooms to prevent Iraqi troops from taking them.

Stability

(Continued from page 1)

address:

It has been observed that "the primary subject of security is people — not states, nor elites, nor the affluent, nor the stronger." This statement came to my mind as I was reading the excellent and thought-provoking papers written for this panel by Dr. Hilf who takes us lucidly from what he describes as the pax Ottomanica to the pax Britannica and warns about the dangers of a perceived pax Americana which might, according to Dr. Hilf, be misconstrued as a pax Hebraica.

I do not intend to repeat or tread over the comprehensive analysis that Dr. Hilf has kindly provided. But I think it is useful to refer once again to the author whom I have just quoted (Professor R. B. J. Walker of the University of Victoria in Canada). In examining the notion of security he stressed that: "It has become less a concept with any analytical precision than an instrument of mystifying rhetoric. Appeals to the need for security justify the most blatant abuses and encourage the resort to escalating levels of violence. Such appeals legitimise vast arsenals and the curtailment of democratic rights and procedures. The concept of security is now more a symptom of the problem than a guide to the possibilities of peace and justice."

The background paper which I have circulated to this panel about "A conference on security and cooperation in the Middle East" is an attempt, from a Jordanian perspective, to look beyond the Gulf war through a broadly defined security concept. It specifies a mode of thought rather than a blue-print. The questions of war and peace are inseparable from the questions of demography, environment and ideology. The "regional matrix" in that paper highlights linkages between security, or rather insecurity, and the degradation of people, environment and cultural identity.

The abuse of human rights, ecocide and the loss of cultural identity are all too readily apparent in the existing regional matrix in the Middle East. The challenge is to move towards a new matrix that safeguards human rights, resources, environment and cultural identity. Military, political and economic route maps must be carefully surveyed to identify an appropriate path for such a movement through the existing regional maze.

As is shown in the background paper, this approach can be illustrated graphically. The three security dimensions are represented on the horizontal axis and the three groups of factors (people, resources/environment and ideology/activism) on the vertical axis of a regional matrix.

This matrix can be extended to varying degrees through subdividing regional factors into their constituent parts. Thus resources/environment can be sub-divided into: oil, water, land and debt for example. Ideology/activism can be sub-divided into such parameters as: radicalism, terrorism and armament. Problems generated by these regional factors can be tackled through military, political or political instruments. Thus border disputes, classified under "land," have been invariably dealt with in the region through military means.

Viewing the region through this matrix can reveal vividly the

emphasis placed, so far on the military dimension as an instrument to respond to challenges. The existing matrix rich in military and internal security tools.

Demography is controlled by police state methods. Radicalism and terrorism are fuelled by the lack of democracy and the absence of freedom of expression. Claims on water rights and land are invariably settled by military force. In the Gulf alone there have been no fewer than 22 active border disputes since 1900. Desert Shield and Desert Storm, originally conceived to meet an external threat, had to be dusted off and put into action to face a threat from within the region. Military debts are easily accumulated as eager suppliers of arms compete for customers. The area has been one of the main world markets for armaments. Expenditures on arms in the Gulf reached hundreds of billions of dollars in the last two decades to no avail. In short, the existing situation is what has been depicted as the political economy of despair.

The approach advocated by Jordan aims at inverting, so to speak, the existing military-rich matrix. The political and economic dimensions of the matrix can be stimulated by a number of practical measures. Thus democratisation and human rights should replace repression and police-state controls. Border and water rights disputes can be referred to the International Court of Justice or international arbitration. The European proposal for a CSDM is one peaceful approach for dealing with inter-regional demographic problems. The economic background to the intifada and the regional demographic implications of the dispossession of the Palestinians are neglected facets of the Arab-Israeli conflict. They need to be soberly assessed in terms of Israel, the occupied territories and the GCC countries. These examples illustrate the instruments needed for evolving the political economy of peace and progress.

In rethinking the meaning of security, a number of postulates have to be questioned. The aim is not to theorise, but rather to break-out from the previous well-trodden regional paths or cul-de-sacs. Other proposals for a Helsinki-type approach for the Middle East have been made in Europe and the United States. All emphasise that their aim is not to contradict particular schemes for regional security but to provide a framework and environment conducive to diplomatic or political initiatives for solving specific problems. A number of ways and means for embarking on such a process have been proposed. The foreign minister of Italy, Mr. Gianni De Michelis, has suggested an "admission ticket" concept through subscribing to a minimal set of rules and principles. Entry of all potential participants does not have to be simultaneous but can be left open.

The concept of an "admission ticket" is a practical way for setting the process in motion. The ticket should be kept "cheap," so many people will not be able to afford it. In Europe, it took fifteen years for the Helsinki process to bear fruit. In the case of the Middle East, the initiation of the process can yield a "front-end" benefit in the form of providing an alternative to the prevailing politics of despair.

An approach based on flexible baskets is important. The three baskets of security, economic development and the human dimension have been proposed by the

Europeans. Rather than moving straight into the brick-wall of long-standing regional deadlocks, such an approach can provide common ground. A number of common problems confront regional adversaries in the Middle East. Energy, arms and external debts are challenges facing not only a country such as Jordan, but others like Turkey, Egypt and Israel. This energy/arms/debt triangle also links the Middle East to the 34 states of Helsinki. This group of states is the main consumer of Middle East energy, its main supplier of armaments and its major creditor (with few exceptions such as China, Japan and Brazil).

The moral weight of the Helsinki process can in this way be brought to bear on its neighbours in the Middle East. Such paradoxical side effects as the transfer of armaments from Europe to the Middle East in the wake of the CEE treaty (Conventional Forces in Europe) must be effectively tackled. Otherwise how can the integrity of the whole process in the Middle East be safeguarded?

As far as energy is concerned, the purpose is not to subjectively refer to "cheap oil" or "expensive oil." Rather it is to evolve an alternative to the highly politicised confrontation between sellers and buyers. "Energy" is conspicuously absent from the 1992 objectives in Europe. The Charter of Paris has implicitly recognised this serious gap in stating "we welcome, in particular, practical steps to create optimal conditions for the economic and rational development of energy resources, with due regard for environmental considerations." In fact, the Netherlands proposed at the Paris summit a "European energy charter" to evolve a cooperative framework that assures stable supplies, stimulates central and east European production and safeguards the environment. It only makes sense that the Middle East (the Gulf as well as the Maghreb) should be included in such a framework. Apart from the dependence of Europe on oil from the Gulf, there is an increasing level of importation of gas from the Maghreb. Gas pipelines across the Mediterranean already link Maghreb producers with Italy and soon Spain, Portugal and possibly France and Germany.

Concerning debt it is worth noting that all the non-oil producing countries in the Middle East suffer from major external debt problems. These problems are linked in no small way to the preceding issue of armaments. Unlike Eastern Europe, so far no concept of regional economic stabilisation has emerged for the Middle East. Debt-ridden countries depend on hand-outs and subsidies coupled with IMF structural adjustment and austerity programmes. This approach has increased tensions between the haves and the have-nots in the region and has provided a fertile socio-economic environment for radicalism. A cornerstone of the new debt strategy under the CSCME is arms control. The systematic implementation of arms control and arms reduction will release substantial funds that were previously wasted on armaments. Countries abiding by such a process will qualify for the systematic and measured reduction of existing debts (most of which were accumulated through arms purchases in the first place). A cursory look at most indebted nations in the Middle East reveals that most, if not all, would no longer need continuous subsidies if the existing debt overhang is removed (this includes Turkey,

Israel and Iraq). The key issues, however, is not the write-off of debts in a vacuum. It should be part of an arms control and reduction package coupled with appropriate economic adjustment policies (stabilisation and structural adjustments).

To assist in this process, a regional debt sinking fund can be set-up by the oil rich countries in the area to share the burden with the CSCE countries in the debt reduction process. The application of the arms control process on the oil countries themselves will help release significant resources from their defence budgets.

The second pillar of the proposed debt reduction strategy is a regional socio-economic package. A regional development fund should be established to provide investment capital for those countries implementing stabilisation and adjustment programmes. National and regional infrastructural programmes should be integrated to the extent possible. Water, energy, transport and telecommunications regional sectoral plans should be evolved. These can become the leading sectors in the economic revitalisation of the post-war Middle East. Water, energy and transport can be viewed as the "steel and coal" of a new Middle East community including the non-Arab states of the region. "A study by the World Bank has shown that in the past, only 5 per cent of the financial surplus of the oil rich countries was invested in the region. There is a need to evolve a new investment criteria and a new basis for calculating rates of return, to help channel part of the remaining 95 per cent into the region."

To avoid disaster for itself and the world, the Middle East urgently needs a remedial expansion of the tools available to promote interdependence both intra and inter-regionally. A utilitarian "worked-out rights" approach has to replace the ethical "intrinsic rights" approach before a meaningful cooperative strategy can emerge. What is needed is to institutionalise a new regional development thinking based on mutual gains and interests (both economic and social). Appropriate cost-benefit criteria at the regional level have to be evolved and applied to sectoral projects such as water, energy and transportation. Welfare economics has extensive tools relating to social cost-benefit analysis that can be extended to an intra-regional context. To use economic jargon, what is needed is to identify "externalities" (i.e. external socio-economic benefits to the region from particular investments) and to "internalise" their effects (by transforming the incidental benefit into a product for which a price is charged). This can apply not only to water, energy and transportation but also to education and manpower migration. A number of multi-lateral agencies (such as the World Bank) can easily provide the technical expertise needed to evolve a new investment criteria for the region. Creative investment plans can, on the basis of such a new investment criteria, transform the existing regional zero-sum game into a scenario of mutual gains and reconstruction.

Some sceptics will object to apparent loose ends and may question the rigorous tightness of the proposal for a CSCME. Let me at once say that at this stage in the post-war period, it is more important to be relevant than fastidiously correct. There will be

those who will question the adequacy of the preconditions. Others may readily stress the differences between the Middle East and the European case. They will say that the framework is different whether in terms of boundaries, armaments or confidence building measures. Of course there are many road blocks. But the exercise aims, in the first place, at mobilising the political will necessary for overcoming those roadblocks. If the Middle East does not yet have the equivalent of the 1973 inter-German treaty, then perhaps non-belligerence can be a first step relating to boundaries. Non-belligerence can also have a beneficial psychological impact in the context of weapons of mass destruction. Confidence building measures (CBMs) can be suggested by third party moderators.

We can seek moderators in the form of non-state entities such as the EC. The formlessness of agenda in the case of the CSCE has to be coupled with a formlessness of process in the case of the CSCME. These are just a few examples. If the will is there, then, appropriate instruments can be evolved to suit the "specificity" (to use a Brussels term) of the Middle East case.

In five months time it will be exactly half a century since Roosevelt and Churchill put together their vision of a postwar order. In August 1941, aboard the "Augusta" off the coast of Newfoundland, they signed the Atlantic Charter. As everyone knows, the cold war tragically intervened and frustrated that dream. A few months ago, in November 1990, the leaders of 34 nations finally laid the cold war to rest and signed the "Charter of Paris for a New Europe." Will the "34" of Paris capture what the "two" on board the "Augusta" failed to do?

The secretary general of the United Nations reminded world leaders at the Paris summit that peace and justice are indivisible. Mr. Perez de Cuellar stressed linkages between Europe and other regions of the globe where current conflicts "have their origin in actions and circumstances going back to the colonial era." He added that "the north will continue to be seated on a base of clay as long as the south does not enjoy a minimum of well-being."

These words could hardly ring more true than in the case of the Middle East. It took 50 years to extend the spirit of peace, security and justice from the "two" to the "34." How long will it be before we realise a "charter for a new Middle East" for the "27" in our region? The 22 Arab states plus the five non-Arab states (Iran, Turkey, Malta, Cyprus and Israel)? This remains an open question. But what can be said with certainty is that nobody can afford to waste another half a century.

Prince

(Continued from page 1)

ence that would discuss options for security, cooperation and development in the Middle East in the post-war era, according to Petra.

Taking part in the conference, which is scheduled for next week, are delegates from Arab-American organisations, grouping prominent political and intellectual personalities, and other Arabs from around the world.

The Crown Prince is also expected to meet several academicians and delegates from informational, economic

and scientific institutions in San Francisco during his stay in the American city, Petra said.

The visit to the United States is the first by a high-ranking Jordanian since King Hussein went in August, shortly after the Gulf crisis began.

Prince Hassan is expected to focus attention on the general situation in Jordan, which is suffering serious economic hardships. Already burdened with a foreign debt of \$8.3 billion, Jordan lost \$3 billion in 1990 and another \$1 billion this year as a result of the Gulf crisis.

Vehicles

(Continued from page 1)

requiring stores, restaurants and other public and commercial places to close at fixed hours in the evening.

Street lighting was also cut in half and central heating in government offices reduced by 25 per cent in a bid to save fuel.

The government last month took delivery of an oil tanker with about more than 100,000 tonnes of crude oil from Yemen and announced that Syria started supplying the country with gasoline and other products under an agreement reached between Damascus and Amman last month.

Kremlin

(Continued from page 1)

view a U.S. attempt to assist the rebels fighting the Iraqi government. Mr. Bessmertnykh said, "Military operations carried out against Iraq... were based on (U.N. Security Council) Resolution 678 and there were no other grounds for use of armed force in Iraq."

Resolution 678, passed by the Security Council last November with Soviet support, authorised the U.S.-led coalition to force Iraq to leave Kuwait.

The Pentagon's senior general, Colin Powell, Friday in Washington warned against speculation on any new military operations in Iraq.

Mr. Baker said that in exchange for the suspension of allied attacks the Iraqi military had agreed there would be "no use of fixed-wing aircraft in Iraq" at least until a permanent ceasefire was put into place.

"We expect agreements to be honoured," he added.

He refused to say if Washington believed Iraq had violated the agreement or how it might react if Baghdad did so.

Levy

(Continued from page 1)

Arab states and talks with a delegation of residents from (the West Bank) and the Gaza."

"However, if a group of Arab states direct talks with Israel, we are ready to do so. If single talks are desired, we are also prepared to do that," the newspaper quoted Mr. Levy as saying.

He said Israel attaches special significance to Mr. Baker's talks with Syria.

"If James Baker succeeded in convincing Syria's President Assad on this peace initiative, then we are on a very good path," the newspaper quoted Mr. Levy.

Only the United States can end the Middle East arm-race, Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens said Saturday.

"If we want to end the arm-race in the region, then the arms dealers have to reach agreement that they will stop selling arms to the region."

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Bubka sets world pole vault record of 6.10m

SAN SEBASTIAN, Spain (AP) — The scoreboard at the Anoeta Sports Pavilion said 6.10 metres. But Soviet pole vaulter Sergei Bubka was thinking in feet.

Bubka became the first pole vaulter to break the 20-foot barrier Friday, dedicating the latest in his string of world records to athletics fans in the United States.

"I'm happy because this is going to get a lot of attention in America," he said in a telephone interview shortly after sailing cleanly over the bar on his first attempt at the world record height.

"This is a gift to the United States," he told Spanish reporters.

The vault broke his own indoor record of 19 feet, 11 1/2 inches (6.08 metres) set last month.

Like so many times before, Bubka closed out the international meet. All the other events had ended and his pole vault opponents had already bowed out when he told the judges to set the bar at 6.10.

Fellow Soviet Viktor Ryzhenkov and Bubka both cleared 19-4 1/2 (5.91 metres). But Bubka watched as Ryzhenkov missed three times at 19-3 1/2 (6.01 metres).

With the Spanish crowd cheering, Bubka tromped down the runway, planted his special super-rigid pole and twisted his way over the bar. Afterwards, he broke into a smile and did a short victory jog with his right hand raised in triumph.

It was the second time in a week that the 27-year-old Bubka had attempted to vault 20 feet. He failed at that height three times last Saturday at the World Indoor Championships in Seville.

"It was very good tonight," Bubka said. "I was in good form and I thought I was going to break the record."

Bubka, who was also the first man to clear six metres indoors, holds the outdoor record at 19-10 1/2 (6.06 metres).

The Soviet star stole the show from American sprinter Carl Lewis, who earlier had finished third in the 60-metre dash in his first indoor appearance in two years. The U.S. star spent 15 minutes signing autographs after the race.

Lewis underwent arthroscopic surgery on his right knee in October, one month after his last outdoor appearance, and said at the time he would forego the

indoor season again. But he apparently was lured by a high appearance fee.

He told Spanish reporters he was confident he would improve considerably once the outdoor season begins and added he planned no more indoor appearances this year.

Lewis clocked a modest 6.74 seconds, behind winner Chidi Imoh of Nigeria at 6.53 and runner-up Raymond Steward of Jamaica, who finished in 6.62.

Lewis, the 100-metre world record holder and two-time Olympic gold medalist at that distance, said he had been hampered by a poor start because he was rusty.

"My technique on the first few metres is not all worked out and that cost me," the Spanish agency EFE quoted him as saying.

Lewis looked clumsy out of the blocks and needed to rally from sixth place in the field of seven to finish where he did.

Imoh's time was only five-hundredths of a second slower than American Leroy Burrell's month-old world record of 6.14.

In other events, American Greg Foster repeated his World Championship triumph in the 60-metres hurdles.

Tyson faces 1st real test since losing title

LAS VEGAS (R) — Mike Tyson faces his toughest examination since losing the world heavyweight title when he fights Canada's Donovan "Razor" Ruddock Monday.

Ruddock will not have to go far to test Tyson more than the two would-be fighters he has met since losing the crown 13 months ago.

Tyson, in exercises intended to save his psyche as much as sharpen his ring skills, flattened Henry Tillman in two minutes 47 seconds of the first round last June and stopped Alex Stewart in shorter time last December.

In fact, the biggest question is whether Ruddock, 25-1, will be too much too soon for Tyson after James "Buster" Douglas took him apart in Tokyo, finally ending his misery with a 10th round knockout.

The undercard of the fight, in an outdoor arena at the Mirage Hotel, has 73-0 Julio Cesar Chavez of Mexico defending his WBC super-lightweight and IBF junior-welterweight titles against American John Duplessis.

WBC champion Maurice Blocker meets IBF holder and fellow American Simon Brown for the Unified Welterweight Championship.

And, in a nod to nostalgia, 39-year-old warhorse Roberto Duran will come out of retirement for the third time in a super-middleweight bout against 14-1 American Pat Lawlor.

But it is Tyson versus Ruddock that will pull in the crowds.

Ruddock, at 1.9 metres, is at least 10 centimetres taller than Tyson and the Jamaican-born Canadian has a 28 cms advantage in reach.

Perhaps more significant is Ruddock's ability to "punch up" instead of down as a bigger man usually does.

Ruddock, also has a dangerous punch that is a sort of combination left-hook uppercut, which left tough heavyweight contender Michael Dokes slumped unconscious on the canvas for several minutes last April.

Many people believe Tyson, 39-1, should have moved up more gradually from the likes of Tillman and Stewart to a fighter not as dangerous as Ruddock.

While Tyson is 5-1 on favourite to stop Ruddock, the former undisputed champion is putting at risk a huge payday against the winner of next month's Evander Holyfield-George Foreman title bout.

Tyson is guaranteed \$2 to \$3 million for fighting Ruddock and a sizeable cut of the pay-per-view television revenue. Ruddock will receive a flat rate of about \$2 million.

It is estimated that Tyson could earn upwards of \$20 million against Holyfield or Foreman.

Shriver, Mayotte win at Florida tennis tournament

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida (R) — Pam Shriver and Tim Mayotte, two Americans attempting to resuscitate faded tennis careers, each scored a much-needed victory at the \$2.25 million International Players Championship.

Shriver, a 28-year-old ranked 115th after once being rated number three in the world, needed two close sets to beat 18-year-old qualifier Miriam Oremans of the Netherlands, 6-3, 7-5, in her first-round match.

Mayotte, ranked 105 but a former regular in the top 10, struggled in the first set but closed out a confident 7-5, 6-2 victory over fellow-American Maliwai Washington, ranked 85.

None of the seeded players saw action on the opening day. Shriver, who had missed almost a year with a serious shoulder injury, has not advanced beyond the third round since returning to competition in January.

Against Oremans, she found her serve and volley game challenged by a young player who made masterful use of the passing shot and lob.

Oremans made a nervous start, allowing the first set to slip away

6-3, but broke Shriver at will in the second set.

Seven of 12 games in the second set were service breaks but Shriver continued to charge the net until Oremans's passing shots finally lost their punch.

After trailing 4-3, Oremans won the next two games, but the American fought back to break Oremans for 6-5 as the Dutch player netted a forehand.

Shriver saved one break point when serving for the match, and ended it when Oremans returned a serve into the net.

"I just need to play matches," said Shriver, who had shoulder surgery last June. "I'm getting more confident all the time. There were just a few unforced errors and indecisive moments."

Meanwhile sixth-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Yugoslavia withdrew from the International Players Championships because of a fracture of his left index finger suffered during practice Thursday.

Ivanisevic said he expected to be sidelined for two to three weeks and would have to miss the next round of Davis Cup as a result of the injury.

Bayern Munich back on top

BONN (R) — Roland Wohlfarth, the German league's leading scorer, was again on the mark as champions Bayern Munich dislodged Werder Bremen from the top of the Bundesliga with a 3-0 victory over Karlsruhe.

He scored Bayern's third goal with a clever lob from close range in the 55th minute to bring his season's tally to 15 from 21 matches as the Bavarians took a one-point lead at the top.

Werder, the 1988 champions, were beaten 3-2 at Hamburg. Danish international Brian Laudrup's 18th minute goal was the highlight of a first half which Bayern struggled to dominate against a defensive Karlsruhe side who are battling in the lower half of the table.

But Bayern played with more zeal after the break. Stefan Effenberg scored after five minutes following a good run from Laudrup to steer Bayern towards a confidence-boosting win ahead of their crucial European Cup

clash with Porto next Wednesday.

Jupp Heynckes's side drew 1-1 at home against the Portuguese in the first leg of their quarter-final tie.

Bayern's Stefan Reuter, who is set to join Italy's Juventus next season, slotted well into the libero position he will occupy against Porto in the absence of German World Cup player Klaus Augenthaler.

The veteran sweeper will miss the tie after being sent off in the first leg.

"We could have scored more goals tonight," Reuter said. "But it is going to be a very difficult task against Porto."

Werder have won only once in 27 visits to their northern rivals Hamburg since 1976.

Hamburg made it clear early on that they were not going to let the record slip, taking a 2-0 half-time lead with goals from Dietmar Beiersdorfer and Pole Jan Furtok.

Depleted Marseille picks a point against St. Etienne

PARIS (R) — Depleted French champions Marseille picked up a point in St. Etienne Friday thanks to a goal from rebel striker Eric Cantona.

Cantona, dropped from the squad which drew with AC Milan in the European Cup nine days ago for refusing a place on the substitutes' bench, scored a 20th minute equaliser in a 1-1 draw.

Czechoslovak midfielder Lubomir Moravcik had given the home side the lead eight minutes earlier.

Leaders Marseille took the field without three first team regulars — striker Jean-Pierre

Papin, who has flu, injured midfielder Bernard Pardo and suspended defender Bernard Casoli.

Midfielder Pardo, injured in training Thursday less than a week before the return match with Milan, needs a knee ligament operation and will be out for the rest of the season.

Marseille technical director Franz Beckenbauer said: "I had the feeling our minds were not 100 per cent on the match. Many of the players were thinking about Milan. But I'm satisfied with the away point."

Duchesnays win dance routine at World Figure Skating Championships

MUNICH, Germany (AP) — Innovative routines have made the Duchesnays popular since the 1988 Olympics, when they stole the spotlight with their "jungle" routine.

But it took a remake of an old routine to finally give them a major international title.

Meanwhile, Americans Kristi Yamaguchi and Tonya Harding continue their figure skating battle awaiting word whether Midori Ito, banged and bruised, will be able to compete.

Isabelle and Paul Duchesnay took the ice dance title Friday with a narrow decision over two Soviet couples.

A hasty decision to opt for a continuation of last year's popular and successful "Missing" routine — dubbed "Missing II" — may have been questioned. But it also won.

Five of the nine judges gave the Duchesnays the nod. The other four first place votes went to

Maia Usova and Alexander Zhulin of the Soviet Union.

But in the complicated scoring system second went to two-time champions Marina Klimova and Sergei Ponomarenko who gained enough seconds to edge past Usova-Zhulin.

At the European competition in late January, Klimova-Ponomarenko edged the Duchesnays. That caused the French-Canadian sister and brother to make a change from an abstract routine to an offshoot of their "Missing" programme. It won the free dance portion last year and put them second overall.

For Harding it's a different story.

She's in her first world competition and is in second place behind American teammate Yamaguchi.

But the one to worry about is Ito, in third, the top free skater in the world the last three years. If Ito wins the final free skating, she will re-take the title she won in 1989 but lost last year when she was hopelessly behind in compulsory figures and finished second to Jill Trenary of the U.S.

But Trenary is gone and so are the figures.

It was nearly gone Friday as she fell over a barrier in the original programme.

She was hospitalised briefly and suffered bruises on the foot and hip. As of Friday night, according to the medical officials, it was still uncertain whether she will be able to compete in Saturday's final programme.

Yamaguchi did not know about Ito's accident until after the competition.

"I had no idea it happened. It's an unfortunate thing. That's why I try to keep my jumps in middle," Yamaguchi said.

Christi Ness, her coach, said she intentionally didn't mention anything to Yamaguchi.

"I didn't want to tell Kristi about Ito's accident," Ness said. "It's like a car accident. People slow down to watch. I didn't want her to slow down."

Harding knew about it when she returned to the rink.

Harding had to relax in the hotel after she skated early in the afternoon. She suffers from asthma and takes about an hour to recover from her routine between the excitement and exertion.

She came back to see how Ito was doing. "I came to see if she is OK," Harding said. "I feel really bad about it. To compete against her would be great. I hope she's OK."

enough to face England in the crucial Group 7 match at Wembley, while central defender McCarthy, who plays for second division Millwall, has damaged knee ligaments.

Charlton, however, is able to recall Liverpool midfielder Ray Houghton and Real Sociedad striker John Aldridge, both of whom missed last month's friendly victory over Wales.

Ireland and England both have three points from two qualifying games, but Ireland lead the group on goal difference. The two fought out a 1-1 draw in Dublin last November.

Ireland calls up Sheedy for game against England

LONDON (R) — Ireland coach Jack Charlton has named Kevin Sheedy in his squad for the European Championship qualifier with England on March 27, although the Everton midfielder has not played for a month because of a hamstring injury.

Charlton will be hoping Sheedy, who served for Ireland in their 1-1 World Cup draw with England last June, will recover in time to add his experience to a side deprived of Captain Mick McCarthy and Liverpool midfielder Ronnie Whelan.

Whelan is recovering from a broken leg and will not be fit

enough to face England in the crucial Group 7 match at Wembley, while central defender McCarthy, who plays for second division Millwall, has damaged knee ligaments.

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GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
6 YAMAH HIRSCH
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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ J652 ♠ Q105432 ♠ Void ♠ 87
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
Pass 1 2

What action do you take?
A.—If partner has a good fit for either of your suits, your side can probably take a lot of tricks on offense—but very few on defense. However, with only three points in high cards there is no action you can take which is not fraught with danger. Partner will always presume you have considerably more than you do, and that could spell trouble. Pass.

Q.2—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ K8 ♠ KQ10653 ♠ K95 ♠ 83
Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What do you respond?
A.—If partner has a maximum no trump with a good fit, this hand has distinct slam possibilities. Therefore, don't make the thutout bid of four hearts. Instead, jump to three hearts, forcing, and see how partner reacts.

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ K8 ♠ KQ10653 ♠ K95 ♠ 83
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 NT Pass 3 7 Pass

What action do you take?
A.—By a narrow margin, we prefer a pass to a correction to four hearts. All thoughts of slam are out of the window. There are some few hands where partner will be able to make nine tricks at no trump, but 10 at

hearts are beyond reach—in the suit contract there's always the risk of encountering a bad trump break. We won't fault you, however, for bidding four hearts.

Q.4—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ K8 ♠ KQ10653 ♠ K95 ♠ 83
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 NT Pass 3 7 Pass

What action do you take?
A.—Yes, there are hands partner could hold where six hearts makes, but there is no sensible way to investigate. Pass. You were only going to initiate a slam probe if partner could cue-bid in response to your jump.

Q.5—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ 9 ♠ Q73 ♠ AKJ6 ♠ QJ762
What is your opening bid?
A.—To pave the way for an easy rebid, we would depart from the principle of initiating action in our longer suit. Instead, we would open the bidding with one diamond and rebid two clubs should partner respond one no trump or one spade.

Q.6—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ 9 ♠ Q73 ♠ KJ65 ♠ AQJ62
What is your opening bid?
A.—Here, there's too much of a discrepancy in suit quality to open one diamond with the intention of rebidding two clubs. We would open one club and pass a one-no-trump response, or rebid one no trump should partner respond one spade.

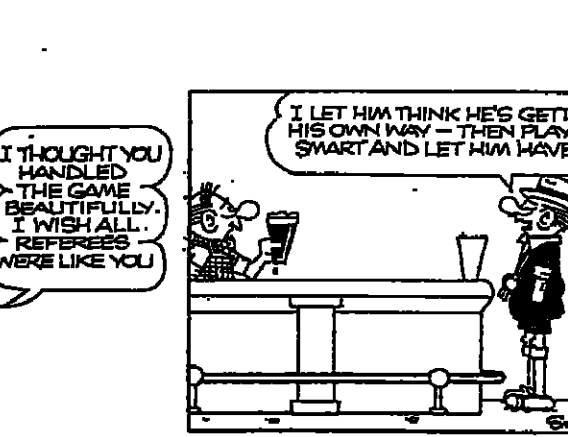
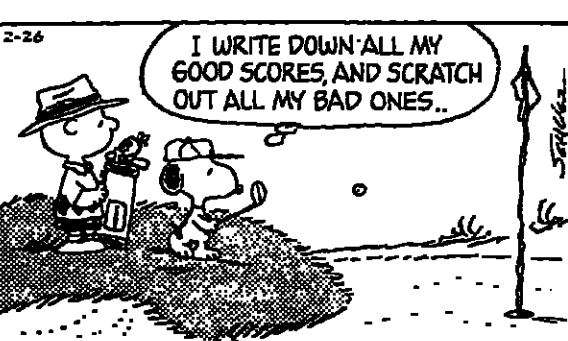
Mutt'n'Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY MARCH 17, 1991

By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Make sure you do nothing in the morning to annoy members of your own clan, then the evening finds you are able to get home conditions just right.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Getting in touch with others seems to be difficult this morning but later you find they are available to you and you can confer with them.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You feel you have too much lack in your life this morning but do not get depressed for the evening brings an awareness of financial opportunity.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You feel you are forlorn and neglected this day but keep steadfast and this quickly changes and you soon become a power in social affairs.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Your need for some additional factors through which to gain the good will of others is at a minimum in the morning but in full flower and blossom later.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Your interest in the lighter side of life is under a cloud in the morning so do your job well and tonight you can get together with friends.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Whatever worldly activity that seems important should be postponed until after noon when you have it in your power to impress powerful persons.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Now you are able to put into motion some new course that appeals to you but spend the morning in preparation and wait until later before taking action.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This morning finds you with a great deal of work to be done so forego pleasures and get it behind you and later you are able to have some pleasant times.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 21) There are a considerable number of minute things to do in the morning to make your hobbies workable but in the evening you can perform with ease.

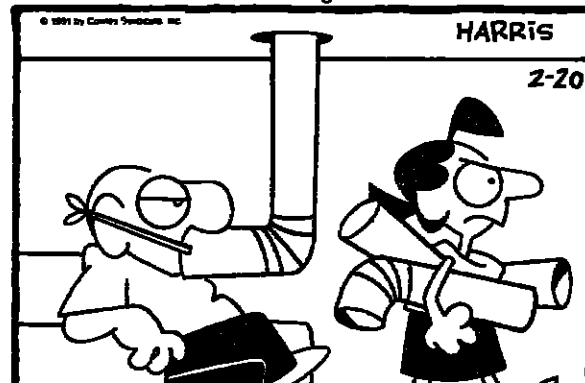
AQUARIUS: (January 22 to February 21) You now find that whatever you want to put in motion requires a smile in the morning then the remainder of the day can be thoroughly enjoyed.

PISCES: (February 22 to March 21) Today's child: If your child were born today he or she has the mental force and ability to see what is needed to start a new set of conditions in force for both individuals and companies who have pretty much gotten into a rut. Give this child advanced courses in modern and up to date methods for handling unusual situations.

"The stars impel, they do not compel." What you make of your life is largely up to you.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris

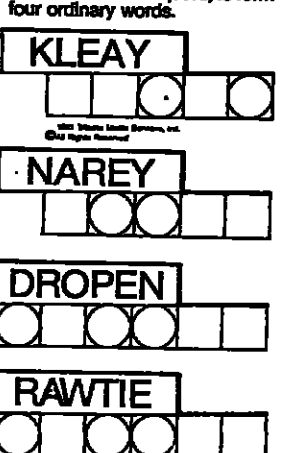


"Harriet, if you don't like my cigar smoke, just say so!"

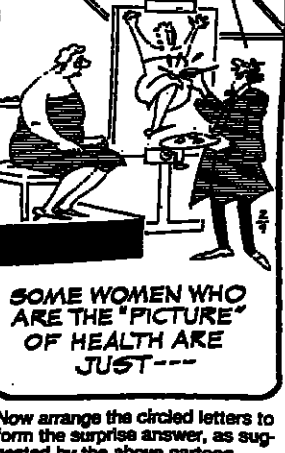
JUMBLE.

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Too much makeup, dear!



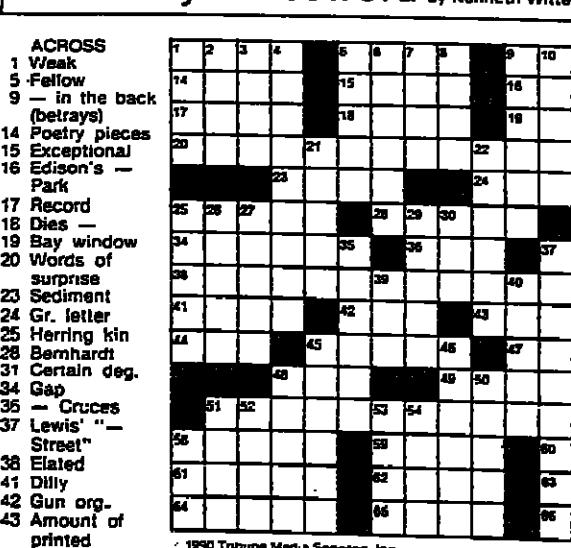
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: O O O O O O O O THAT O O O O

Yesterday's Jumble: MAGIC TUNED GUILTY HANDED
Answer: When he related the story of the day's catch, he would usually go — TO ANY LENGTH

THE Daily Crossword

by Kenneth White



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Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



Asian contract workers expect rich pickings from Gulf war

MANILA (R) — Indian trader Francis D'Souza may soon be selling carpets in Kuwait again. And Filipino mechanic Jun Roble may be back in his old job fixing machines at a bottling plant in Riyadh.

D'Souza of Bombay and Roble of Laguna province in the Philippines are among tens of thousands of Asian workers who fled the Gulf after Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait.

Cash-strapped governments from Pakistan to the Pacific rim say most of them want to go back and predict a flood of workers returning to the Gulf with the end of the war.

"Hopefully, with the onset of this peace, our workers, with the skills that they have, will be able to go back again," said Jose Sarmiento, chief of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

Philippine congressman Jose de Venecia said the rebuilding of Gulf cities and towns devastated by the war could create up to 300,000 jobs for Filipino contract workers.

Manila officials said rebuilding Kuwait alone could take five years at a cost of \$100 billion. Other estimates have run much higher.

The promise of big dollar remittances has triggered a scramble among Asian governments for job orders.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) said the war and the international trade embargo against Iraq weakened the balance of payments of eight countries in the region by more than \$7 billion.

It said the eight countries — Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand — lost nearly \$1.5 billion in remittances from workers who fled the Gulf.

About 72,000 Sri Lankans, nearly 40,000 Filipinos, more than 9,000 Thais and tens of thousands of Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis left their jobs and returned to their countries after the August invasion. They included thousands of housemaids.

Many of the workers, like D'Souza and Roble, found themselves jobless at home.

"I was offered 1,500 rupees (\$80) per month," Bombay worker Joseph Monteiro said in an interview. "I felt like I was being

asked to work for free." Monteiro had been earning 12,000 rupees (\$650) for 14 years as machine operator in Saudi Arabia before the crisis.

Jobless Pakistani returnees have found themselves drawing on their life savings. Many complain that banks refuse to honour drafts of remittances they sent home before the Iraqi invasion or to convert Kuwaiti currency they brought with them.

Pakistan is sending a high-level delegation to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait this week to seek job opportunities for Pakistani workers, government sources said.

Labour and Manpower Minister Mohammad Ejaz Ul Haq, who will lead the team, said he hoped 150,000 Pakistani workers could be accommodated in Kuwait.

The Indian government, which lost at least \$300 million in remittances alone during the Gulf crisis, has set up a ministerial committee to identify reconstruction projects India might win.

Indian companies say they hope they can corner as much as \$10 billion of business.

Wary of the competition, the Philippines is sending Labour Secretary Ruben Torres to the Gulf to lobby for jobs for Filipinos.

President Corason Aquino's chief of staff, Oscar Orbos, said the end of the war opened "great opportunities" for Filipino construction, services and the manpower exporting companies.

"The government will do everything within its means to make Filipino entities competitive," Orbos told a manpower conference in Manila last week.

The familiar sight of jobless Filipinos in long queues outside job recruiting agencies in Manila disappeared when allied bombs fell on Iraq on Jan. 17.

"Now the deluge is back," said receptionist Vangie Custodio of Ad Overseas Placement Agency. "Many of our job applicants want to go to Kuwait."

At least 50 per cent of the more than 9,000 Thais who returned home are eager to go back, said Saming Samonchai, manager of the O.P.S. Group (1984) Co Ltd, a Bangkok recruitment agency.

"They'd go back to any country in the area except Libya, where many have been cheated of their salaries by unscrupulous employers and job recruiters," Saming said.

Dollar seen to remain static against dinar in Amman market

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The American dollar appeared to be continuing a downward slide in Amman's black market Saturday with dealers offering rates less than quoted by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ).

Banking experts and dealers said the market was plentiful of the greenback, and they expected the black market to remain static in the days to come as more of the currency is brought into the country by Jordanian expatriates in the Gulf.

"The market is awash with dollars of Jordanian residents of Kuwait," said a dealer, who attributed the rise in supply of the currency to the unfreezing of Kuwait residents' accounts in European banks. "The conventional supply and market forces have taken over and the result is the decline of black market rates," he pointed out.

Many Jordanian expatriates in Kuwait maintained foreign accounts in Europe, mostly in London and Switzerland, but these accounts were completely frozen in line with an international move adopted after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August last year. The resolution called for a total suspension of all dealings in assets and accounts of the Kuwaiti government and residents of Kuwait.

The measure, which was subsequently amended to exclude dealings authorised by the toppled emiri government, was mostly lifted since the end of the Gulf war and liberation of Kuwait early this month.

This allowed individual account holders to operate the accounts and many Jordanian expatriates have been transferring part of their money home, banking officials said.

The dollar was traded at between 670 to 675 fils in the black market Saturday, in the same range set officially by the Central Bank, compared with 750 fils to 760 fils in the first few days of panic buying after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Many Jordanians who found themselves penniless in the wake of the Iraqi-imposed strict limitations imposed on withdrawals of their deposits and savings in Kuwaiti banks in addition to the freeze of accounts abroad have been liv-

ing off their relatives and friends after fleeing the emirate to Jordan.

"Now I can repay my debts," said Hussein Kamal, an accountant whose deposits of over \$100,000 remained frozen at a London bank throughout the crisis. "I have already transferred part of the deposits to Amman," added Kamal, who lived in Kuwait for 17 years before leaving the emirate in September.

The accountant, however, does not know what will become of his savings in Kuwaiti dinars held at a bank in Kuwait.

"I have been told by friends that I could withdraw the money as and when banks become operational," he said. "But no-one seems to know when."

Black market trading in the dollar was presumably thin Saturday, according to banking experts and dealers. "The only advantage for sellers in the black market is that they do not have to pay any commission," said a dealer referring to the obligatory service charges levied by commercial banks.

However, banking circles expected the black market to survive in view of CBJ regulations on sale of foreign currency by commercial banks, the only legal outlet for foreign exchange following the closure of private exchange houses in early 1989.

Availability of Kuwaiti dinars becomes short

In the meantime, Kuwaiti dinars appeared to have disappeared from the black market after surfacing in the initial days after the liberation of Kuwait and the end of the Gulf war on Feb. 28.

Security sources said they had arrested several people and seized large amounts of Kuwaiti dinars before they could enter the market in the first week of March.

"It was only a precautionary

measure," said a senior security source pointing out to the possibility that "unreleased Kuwaiti dinars could have come into Jordan through private sources and entered the black market."

Shortly after the Iraqi invasion, the ousted emiri government accused the Iraqis of seizing a large amount of Kuwaiti banknotes in various denominations, fresh mint held by the Central Bank of Kuwait, and issued a warning along with their serial numbers.

The government of Kuwait, which has returned to the emirate, has announced plans to withdraw the present banknotes in circulation and replace them with fresh mint. No money is changing hands in Kuwait now since the government is offering relief supplies to its people free of cost pending the restoration of basic services and amenities.

Many Jordanian expatriates who have returned home are hanging onto their Kuwaiti dinars hoping that they would be able to collect full value for the money as and when some form of normalcy is returned to the emirate, which faces a long way ahead in post-war reconstruction of its infrastructure and services.

The Kuwaiti dinar, one of the strongest currencies in the international market prior to the invasion, was proclaimed equivalent to the Iraqi dinar and then worthless by the Iraqi government which also ordered all dealings in the currency terminated in early October.

However, the emiri government, operating out of Saudi Arabia, had been buying the currency for full pre-invasion value from Kuwaiti nationals and at reduced rates from others through one of the biggest Saudi exchange houses.

The last rate quoted for the Kuwaiti dinar in the black market here was JD 1.7, compared with a pre-crisis value of JD

Kuwaitis accuse government of incompetence over shortages

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwaitis, angered by the lack of food, water and electricity two weeks after liberation, are increasingly accusing their government of incompetence over the shortages.

"At least until the Iraqis left, we had food and water. Now there is none of anything," said a bank executive who endured the seven-month Iraqi occupation.

Palestinians and other foreign residents complain that what little food is arriving is being distributed only to Kuwaitis, with meagre left-overs for foreigners who form the majority of the emirate's population.

"The trouble is, people are impatient because the government promised more than they could deliver," said Tariq Al-Barak, head of the Kuwait Supply Company which imports subsidised food for the government.

"So many ministries want their supplies. They need supplies to put out the oil fires, supplies of water, the ministry of electricity needs spare parts, the ministry of municipalities wants to bring equipment to clean up the city, but there is only a limited capacity of roads and the Iraqis took all our trucks," he told Reuters in an interview.

Barak denied there was any discrimination against Palestinians. He produced lists which he said proved that supplies were being issued in Palestinian neighbourhoods.

In the Shuweikh neighbourhood, at least 500 people queued for free bread Saturday at one of seven bakeries functioning in the city. Only one production line was working and there were separate queues for Kuwaitis and Palestinians.

"God only knows when the shops will reopen," a stoical Kuwaiti said as he waited for his ration of five flat pittas. Two dozen academics, doctors and artists demonstrated against the government earlier this week to protest at the inadequate and haphazard distribution of food.

Kuwaitis are particularly miserable because the problems come on the eve of Ramadan. Many Kuwaitis are trying to get out of the emirate and witnesses said there was a two-mile queue to cross the Saudi border.

But some say the government is withholding passport stamps ensuring they will be allowed to return. They also say the government is not allowing Palestinians to leave.

Barak said his organisation did not know what food supplies

were coming from neighbouring Saudi Arabia until they arrived. Witnesses said some 200 trucks were lined up on the Saudi side of the border Friday but none was moving.

Barak said the government's biggest mistake was to hand out free food.

"Because it is being distributed free, people are grabbing goods they don't need and those who do need are not getting

them," he said.

He said the government had ignored advice to give people money so they would only buy the goods they needed.

"We had a distribution network with 40 outlets at cooperative stores that worked up to the last day of the occupation. But when the government came in from outside, they wanted to start from zero," he said.

"They won't learn from our experience," he pointed out.

Profits of top Hong Kong bank drop 35%

HONG KONG (R) — The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation confirmed the most pessimistic forecasts by posting a 35 per cent decline in 1990 profits, leaving analysts hoping the decks had been cleared.

Chairman William Purves said much of this first decline for more than 20 years in the bank's profits was due to provisions for losses by U.S. and Australian interests and the world economic downturn.

"Provided the bank used this opportunity to make further provisions, you could argue that the worse the results, the better the share price because you're starting with a clean slate," said James Osborn, assistant director at Barings Securities.

Hongkong Bank, the largest non-Japanese Asian bank, posted a net profit after tax and transfers to inner reserves for calendar 1990 of 3.09 billion dollars (\$385 million) against 4.77 billion (\$611 million) in 1989.

Analysts said it appeared the bank had been ruthless in getting all the bad news over with in 1990, a year that has been a poor one for financial institutions worldwide.

"They've taken it on the chin," said John Mulcahy, research director at Peregrine Brokerage, referring to the 221 million Australian dollar (\$287 million) charge for doubtful debts, bad debt provisions and suspended interest on loans reported by Hongkong Bank of Australia.

Analysts detected a similar determination over the group's European securities arm, the James Capel Group, which suffered a \$20.5 million (\$35 million) loss, and over the Hongkong Bank's wholly-owned Marine Midland Bank of New York, hard hit by provisions against property debt.

Marine Midland posted a 1990 net loss of \$295.6 million. Mulcahy said a question mark hung over future performance of Marine Midland but tipped an

improvement in 1991.

Hongkong Bank, founded in 1865 to finance British and American China trade, said its Hong Kong and Asian operations performed well. Analysts expect the trend to continue.

The bank has considerable influence in the British colony still, printing about 80 per cent of the currency and performing many of the functions of a central bank. "It's too early to tell if the cancer has all been cut out like a patient after an operation it's in for a long period of rehabilitation," said Barry Yates, director of international research at Asia Equity Holdings.

Some analysts viewed Purves's remark that despite poorer results, the bank had managed to make transfers to inner reserves — one of Hong Kong's best-kept secrets — as grounds for optimism.

im.

The bank, in common with previous practice, made no statement on the inner reserves. Analysts said estimates could total between 10 to 45 billion dollars (\$1.3 billion to \$5.7 billion) but were at best guesses.

On Feb. 3 Chairman William Purves said the bank may reveal its inner reserves to comply with planned European Community bank disclosure rules.

The bank plans to shift its registration to Britain from Hong Kong in the run-up to 1997, when China resumes sovereignty of the colony.

"I expect this year (1991) to be comprehensively better than last year," said Mulcahy, who tentatively forecast 1991 profits could rise as high as four billion dollars (\$513 million).

JORDAN TIMES
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Paris Club saves Poland 80 per cent of debt repayments

WARSAW (R) — Poland welcomed its debt reduction agreement with Western governments Friday and said it amounted to a cut of nearly 80 per cent in its repayments over the next three years.

This was close to Warsaw's persistent demand for an 80 per cent debt reduction which it has argued for a year is essential if it is to successfully rebuild and restructure its economy after 45 years of communism.

The Paris Club of 16 Western creditor governments formally agreed to an immediate 30 per cent reduction and a further 20 per cent after three years of the \$33.3 billion that it holds of Poland's \$48.5 billion debt.

Poland's chief debt negotiator, Janusz Sawicki, said on his return from Paris he expected that Warsaw's commercial bank creditors would now start "serious negotiations" on the reduction of more than \$11 billion Poland owes them.

"The reduction means some \$17 billion will be written off," Sawicki told Reuters. "Given the realities of the world of finances we did quite a good first step. We will have no capital payments over the next three years, and for several more years. The 80 per cent cut in the interest payments means we have some \$600 million

yearly to pay."

Sawicki added: "The agreement should decisively improve Poland's credit worthiness and make it possible for Poland to return to the financial world of the West."

"We hope that some governments will participate in the conversion of up to 10 per cent of capital and we hope that some friendly countries will also decide for higher than 10 per cent conversion," he noted.

Sawicki declined to speculate which countries might be involved.

Under the agreement, governments may agree to a conversion of 10 per cent of capital into zloty funds under a debt swaps facility to environmental and telecommunications projects in Poland. Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz, architect of Poland's radical economic transformation, hailed the agreement as an exceptional solution in the history of the Paris Club and an expression of approval and support for the reforms.

"We shall get big relief in the difficult years of the reconstruction of the economy. And the timing of the reduction is important. It is necessary at this moment," Balcerowicz told the official news agency PAP.

Soviet strikes spread

MOSCOW (R) — Miners' strikes in major Soviet coal-producing regions have spread despite stern warnings about the consequences for the economy and a government offer of a rich package of benefits.

A spokesman for the striking miners in the Siberian Kuzbass, pressing for the resignation of President Mikhail Gorbachev, said he expected no chance in the situation until next week when pits in other areas could join the strike.

"Karaganda (a major field in the republic of Kazakhstan) is expected to join the action on March 18, after the referendum," said Alexander Smirnov, referring to Sunday's referendum to determine the future shape of the Soviet Union.

As the central Soviet media continued its criticism of the strike for the damage it was causing to the economy, especially the metallurgical industry, the independent Postfactum agency re-

ported a government offer of substantial concessions.

But the striking Kuzbass miners said they doubted the promise of better living conditions would make any difference. "It is not a concession from the government, just a repeat of 1989," a union official said.

Hundreds of thousands of Soviet miners walked out in 1989 but returned to work after a government pledge to provide substantial improvements in wages and other benefits.

The latest patchy strike action, now two weeks old, has been fuelled by anger at the government's failure to honour those commitments.

The strike has closed about 35 out of 100 per cent in Kuzbass and about 60 of more than 200 per cent in the Ukraine, where the republic's president Leonid Kravchuk said it was impossible to meet the miners' demands for better wages.

TODAY AT

Cinema **RAINBOW** Tel: 625155

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Show: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema **CONCORD** Tel: 677420

Johnny Hand Some

Show: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema **PHILADELPHIA** Tel: 634144

BROOKE SHIELDS (...) IN KING OF THE GYPSIES

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema **NIJOM** Tel: 675571

THE PUNISHER

Show: 12:30, 3:30 p.m.

Play

"No For Despair"

Show: 8:30 p.m.

Friday & Sunday extra show at 11:00 a.m.

Cinema **PLAZA** Tel: 699238

DEALING WITH SATANS (Arabic)

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30 p.m.

Serbia, Montenegro presidency representatives resign Croatia, fearing Yugoslav army crackdown, puts police on alert

BELGRADE (R) — The Republic of Croatia, fearing a federal army crackdown, said Saturday it had put police and reservists on full alert, hours after the Yugoslav president resigned and warned of the threat of civil war.

But in an apparent attempt to calm tensions in the multi-ethnic cocktail of six republics and two provinces, the Yugoslav government said peaceful reform was the only way to solve the country's economic and political problems.

An official from the ruling Croatian Union Party said Saturday police units were guarding key buildings in the secession-minded republic after the army failed in an attempt to introduce emergency measures Friday.

"Since Friday, Croatian police and militia reserves were put on the highest state of alert. They were issued with weapons," said the official.

Local journalists in the Croatian capital Zagreb said units were in front of the radio and television stations and the main post office. Residents said the atmosphere was otherwise calm.

Non-Communist Croatia, the

second largest republic, wants greater autonomy but Serbia, the biggest republic and allied to the Communist-dominated army, favours maintaining central rule.

Croatia narrowly avoided a clash with the military after a week of tension in January. Zagreb then ordered 20,000 police reservists to demobilise under an agreement with the army, which in turn cancelled an order putting soldiers on combat readiness.

On Friday, the army failed for the second time in three days to persuade the collective presidency to accept its proposal for emergency measures in response to five days of anti-Communist protests in the Serbian and Yugoslav capital, Belgrade.

Two people were killed and scores hurt in Belgrade last Saturday but the violence gave way to a peaceful vigil which forced concessions from Serbia's Communist rulers.

President Borisav Jovic, a Serbian Communist who backed the military plan, resigned Friday saying the federation was edging toward civil war.

Vice-President Stipe Mesic, a Croat, said he would act as presi-

dent until he takes over the job fully in May under the annual rotating system introduced by late Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito to prevent over-concentration of power.

"The country is at a critical stage of its disintegration," Jovic said in a television address. He accused others of taking decisions that could destroy the country.

But the Yugoslav government, meeting in emergency session to discuss Jovic's shock resignation, said it was not too much reform that was unhinging the federation but too little.

"Quite the opposite, their negation and prevention has increased tensions and deepened the crisis," Prime Minister Ante Markovic said.

The outcome of the meeting suggested the hardline group, including Jovic and the army leadership, had lost ground.

Alija Izetbegovic, president of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, said there were no immediate conflicts demanding a military crackdown.

"What is endangered are the remnants of Yugoslavia's totalitarian system," he said. "I think

Jovic wanted to use armed force to defend those remnants."

The pro-army Communist Party and allied groups planned a rally in Belgrade Saturday, but a similar meeting outside Zagreb's television station was cancelled.

The presidency representative from Montenegro, Yugoslavia's smallest and poorest republic, said later he too was resigning from the eight-member collective body.

"(Nenad Bucin) said he could not accept the continuous disintegration of Yugoslavia, its armed forces and all federal institutions," Tanjug News Agency said.

Montenegro is the only republic other than Serbia still in Communist hands and, like Serbia, supported the army plan.

In Belgrade, several thousand pro-Communist demonstrators chanted "army, army" and waved banners saying "long live Yugoslavia."

In contrast to the anti-Communist protests earlier this week, most of the demonstrators Saturday were older people rather than students.

Liberia peace talks start without Taylor

MONROVIA (R) — Liberian peace talks to end 15 months of civil war have finally opened with aides of key absentee Charles Taylor insisting he will still attend.

The all-Liberia conference began in the shattered capital Friday evening, six hours behind schedule, and adjourned 20 minutes later.

All the main actors were present bar Taylor, who said in a radio interview his personal security was at risk in Monrovia. The city is controlled by a West African peacekeeping force and is home to two anti-Taylor mili-

tias.

But Taylor aides at the conference still expected him to travel down from his base at Gbarnga, 260 kilometres inland from Monrovia.

"Taylor's coming but I don't know when," Laveli Supuwood, who describes himself as justice minister, told reporters.

Taylor already styles himself president of Africa's oldest republic and says he controls 90 per cent of the country outside the capital.

Opening the conference, which resumed Saturday morning, Gambian Foreign Minister Omar

S. Korean students urge Roh to resign

SEOUL (AP) — Thousands of students hurling firebombs and rocks clashed with riot police in two cities Saturday in the largest protest this year demanding President Roh Tae-Woo's resignation over a bribery scandal.

Fierce fighting was reported in Seoul between police and about 10,000 students. In the southern city of Kwangju, about 500 students threw rocks and firebombs at police.

Both groups demanded a new probe into the bribery scandal, the largest since Roh took office in 1988, as well as the president's ouster.

There were no immediate reports of violence in other cities. The South Korean News Agency Yonhap said a rally in the eastern city of Chunchon ended peacefully after two hours.

Government officials said about 25,000 riot and plainclothes police were deployed nationwide in an attempt to thwart the protests.

Shouting "down with Roh Tae-Woo," the Seoul students poured out of back alleys and took over a large section of a 10-lane thoroughfare in fierce battles which lasted about 30 minutes.

Squads of helmeted riot police fired barrages of tear gas that filled several blocks. Students threw hundreds of firebombs and dug up pavement blocks from the sidewalks, broke them into fist-size chunks and hurled them at police.

The protests in Seoul were the largest and most violent since last May, when 15,000 students took over parts of the city centre in a night of anti-government rioting.

Romanian premier seeks to revamp ruling party

BUCHAREST (R) — Romania's ruling party opened its first congress since the revolution Saturday with Prime Minister Petre Roman seeking to turn the National Salvation Front (NSF) into a Western-style Social Democratic Party.

Roman is due to deliver a keynote speech at the two-day congress, which he hopes will boost the NSF's flagging popularity.

The congress, long overdue after several postponements caused by internal rifts, assembled 705 voting delegates in a Bucharest sports hall to approve a party statute and programme for future elections and to elect new leadership bodies.

The NSF newspaper An (Today) threw its weight behind Roman's market-economy reform faction, which faced a showdown with conservatives and populists linked to the Communist past.

The challenge facing Roman is to convert the NSF from an amorphous mass of disparate factions — ranging from liberal capitalist elements to Social Democrats,

Benin president faces premier in 2nd round of elections

COTONOU, Benin (AP) — The old torture house by the sea is empty, but pictures of its victims have started appearing on Benin's streets amid fears its former master may regain power.

In the second round of Benin's first free presidential elections in 21 years, President Mathieu Kerekou faces Prime Minister Nicéphore Soglo.

Although Kerekou trailed Soglo in the first round of balloting this month, many observers believe that those who voted for other candidates in the first round will favour Kerekou on March 24.

Kerekou got 27 per cent of the vote against Soglo's 36 per cent in the first round. So Kerekou would have to win two-thirds of the votes of those who chose other candidates. Due to regional rivalries and personal enmities, the defeated candidates appear to be lining up against Soglo.

If Kerekou loses, he will be the first president on the African continent ousted by the ballot box. Unlike other African presidents, he did not control the government machinery during the voting, having been forced to hand over power a year ago to a caretaker government headed by Soglo.

Riots and strikes forced Kerekou to call a national convention, which set up an interim government that is to rule until after the presidential elections.

In Cotonou and other towns, pamphlets with photographs of victims of Kerekou's torture cells warned against a return to the harsh oppression with which he ruled from 1972.

"Look at what he did to your children," the pamphlets say. "Here's what remains of our assassinated youth. Never again. Vote with respect for your newly won dignity."

"What did we fight for, if he's coming back to haunt us?" asked businessman Aicha Alao. "Under Kerekou we lived in terror."

She said schoolchildren were ordered to spy on their families. "A friend of mine is among many people who were detained because his son reported he spoke against Kerekou."

While his soldiers terrorised the population, his government nationalised Western companies and "treated the exchequer like a personal piggy bank," she said.

Irregularities discovered in El Salvador elections

SAN SALVADOR (Agencies) — As El Salvador's election counting ground into its fifth day with no final results, observers said serious election irregularities had been discovered.

Election officials, political parties and international observers said the irregularities included stuffing ballot boxes, illegally barring eligible voters, and destroying valid votes.

"Clearly the irregularities add up to a very serious level... there have clearly been isolated cases of straight fraud, and there are also the products of maladministration," David Browning, an official British election observer, told journalists.

He said no one doubted the ruling rightist party Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) had won the majority of votes, but its majority in the newly-expanded 84-seat National Assembly appeared in doubt.

U.S. embassy sources estimated Friday that ARENA would win 39 to 41 seats in the assembly, the Christian Democrats 24 to 26, the leftist Democratic Convergence eight to 11 and the ARENA-allied National Conciliation Party six to eight.

The Communist Nationalist Democratic Alliance Party was estimated at one to two seats.

An estimated 50 to 60 per cent of the 2.2 million Salvadoreans eligible to vote went to the polls last Sunday to choose 84 deputies for the National Assembly and mayors in 263 municipalities, unofficial estimates show.

Ruben Zamora, leader of the

Baker ends Moscow visit without resolving stalemate on arms pacts

MOSCOW (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker ended a three-day visit to Moscow Saturday without resolving the stalemate over nuclear and conventional weapons agreements.

Baker wound up his stay with a meeting with officials from the Baltic republics after praising the Kremlin for "some progress" following its bloody crackdown two months ago in which 22 people died in Latvia and Lithuania. He then flew on to Ankara, Turkey, where he will meet with President Turgut Ozal.

Baker met with Moscow-based representatives of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania at the home of U.S. Ambassador Jack Matlock. Egidijus Bickauskas, the Lithuanian representative, said after the meeting there had been very little movement toward establishing genuine dialogue with the Kremlin. He saw some progress, "but not the kind of progress we would like to see."

The other representatives, Janis Peters of Latvia and Juri Kahn of Estonia, declined to comment on the meeting.

Baker, following a meeting Friday with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev Friday, said the Soviet leader had acted to initiate dialogue with the separatist republics and noted that tensions had been defused because some Soviet troops had been withdrawn from Latvia and Lithuania.

But a spokesman for Lithuania's parliament said officials in that Baltic republic have not seen "any evidence of a withdrawal of Soviet troops."

After meeting with the Baltic representatives, Baker met with former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, who resigned in

December after warning against an impending dictatorship.

Shevardnadze, after the meeting, said he still feared a dictatorship.

"Yes, there is still this danger," he said, adding that Gorbachev also has said that if the government cannot achieve what it set out to do, "there will be chaos."

On Friday night, Baker dined with radical reformers and leaders of other separatist Soviet republics, including the fiercely independent president of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia. Baker said he was not interfering in Soviet politics, although he said the U.S. administration would expand its contacts with his guests.

At a news conference after meeting with Gorbachev, Baker said the Soviet leader told him negotiators had been appointed to hold talks with Baltic leaders. At least 22 people were killed in January in Lithuania and Latvia at the hands of Soviet troops as the republics continued to exercise their secessionist policies.

Baker also met with Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh.

He said that in his previous meeting with Bessmertnykh, in Washington in January, "tensions were very high." This time, he said, they talked about developing a "process of mechanism... to lead to a peaceful resolution and to negotiation and dialogue."

"It seems to me that steps have been taken to develop such a process and mechanism. Furthermore, steps have been taken to defuse tensions by withdrawing some forces from Lithuania and... Latvia as well," Baker said.

On other Soviet domestic issues, Baker registered sym-

pathy for Gorbachev's uphill effort to reform the economy, and said the problems were tied to the political situation in the country.

He and the United States supports Gorbachev's efforts to continue reform, both toward "political pluralism and economic reform toward a free market goal at some point."

Baker pronounced the state of U.S.-Soviet relations as on the upswing following the Gulf war. Baker, however, failed to break a stalemate on arms control treaties with the Soviet Union.

The stalemate involves a treaty signed by 22 nations in November to make historic cutbacks in troops, tanks and other non-nuclear forces across Europe and a long-delayed treaty to reduce U.S. and Soviet long-range nuclear missiles by about 30 per cent.

Baker said none of the problems in carrying out the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty had been resolved. And, he said, there was no substantive movement on the strategic arms reduction treaty.

The TASS news agency said, "the Soviet side outlined new proposals allowing to resolve the existing problems." But, TASS said, "the secretary of state said he was not satisfied with the proposals."

Baker said a U.S.-Soviet summit, which was supposed to be held last month, would not be rescheduled until the START treaty was finished. Unsettled issues include procedures for monitoring Soviet production of solid-rocket fuel and assembly plants, and how much information from missile tests would be exchanged.

Gorbachev's future linked to outcome of union referendum

MOSCOW (R) — The Kremlin has summoned 200 million citizens this weekend to vote on changing the shape of the Soviet Union, in a referendum that could also affect the future of President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Whatever the outcome of the poll, Soviet and foreign analysts believe it is unlikely to offer more than a breathing space to the beleaguered leader in the face of a mounting social and political crisis.

With the country's 15 republics increasingly asserting their independence against the central

Soviet administration, Gorbachev called Sunday's vote as part of a bid to prevent the collapse of the vast state.

In a televised appeal Friday night, the 60-year-old president who has changed the face of the once monolithic Communist society called for a massive "yes" to the key question in the referendum:

"Do you think it necessary to preserve the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics in which human rights and liberties will be fully guaranteed

for all nationalities?"

There seems little doubt that a majority of those who turn out on Sunday will give a positive answer, but opinion surveys suggest the total "yes" vote could be well under 50 per cent of registered electors.

Such an outcome, according to a Moscow City Communist Party document quoted this weekend by the independent news agency Interfax, could have "especially grave consequences for the referendum's initiators" — a clear reference to Gorbachev.

China criticises Taiwan reunification plan

PEKING (AP) — China has criticised a reunification plan adopted in Taiwan, saying it gets unreasonable conditions that will delay efforts to unite Chinese, an official report said Saturday.

The Xinhua News Agency said a government spokesman "expressed the hope that the Taiwan authorities would make fewer empty remarks and do more practical things" to promote reunification. Xinhua did not identify the official who made the comments in an interview with the news agency.

The official said the programme "sets some unreasonable conditions for artificially delaying" exchanges and visits between officials of Taiwan and China.

On Thursday, the National Unification Council in Taiwan adopted a three-phase programme for reunification that calls for economic reforms by China, increased trade and other links, and, finally talks on a united China.

The package went one step further than previous reunification proposals in Taiwan by calling for each side to recognise the other as political entities.

The 31-member council is led by President Lee Teng-Hui and consists of government leaders, lawmakers and scholars.

China's rejection of the programme had been expected because officials in Peking want

direct links without any new conditions.

Taiwan's Nationalist government fled to the island in 1949 after losing a civil war to the Communists on the mainland. Both Peking and Taipei still claim to be the legitimate rulers of all China.

Meanwhile China plans to set up more military training bases for students to instill patriotic fervour and Socialist values in young people, official news reports said Saturday.

Chinese officials have stressed the ideological work of the Communist Party since the Democracy Movement that was crushed by the military in June 1989.

Fawley towers hotel gutted in fire

LONDON (R) — The hotel used for filming external shots of the popular British comedy series Fawley Towers, which has been distributed worldwide, has been gutted by fire. The 40-bedroom hotel, which was reduced to a shell by the blaze, became a tourist attraction after it was used in the filming of the series, in which comedian John Cleese played the part of an accident-prone hotel manager. The 40-bedroom hotel in Buckinghamshire, west of London, had been empty for three years.

Democratic Convergence, accused ARENA and election authorities Wednesday of mounting a "brutal fraud" to deny his coalition votes. ARENA and the elections council denied the charges.

The Convergence retains links with the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front guerrilla movement, which has fought a civil war for the past 11 years against successive U.S.-backed governments.

Official complete final results were not expected until Monday. Meanwhile last-minute disputes have held up an agreement among three top political parties that was to have opened the way to ending the 11-year-old civil war, political sources say.

President Alfredo Cristiani's announcement of the accord, which involved a method for purging and reforming the armed forces, had been planned for Friday, the sources said. His speech was cancelled because a leftist party refused, for the time being, to sign the agreement.

Overhaul of the military, which has been accused of judicial impunity and systematic violation of human rights for decades, has been the most difficult issue in 11-month-old U.N.-mediated peace talks.

Several sources who took part in drafting the agreement said it was reached in meeting the past few months among members of ARENA the Christian Democratic Party and the Democratic Convergence.

The three parties — rightist,

centrist and leftist, respectively — represent about 90 per cent of the electorate. Their agreement on how to surmount the principal obstacle to peace was considered unprecedented and its implementation would have been virtually assured.

"There is an accord among the three main political forces on demilitarisation of society," said Fidel Chavez Mena, head of the Christian Democratic Party and one of the three men who signed the document. The agreement was leaked to several foreign correspondents this week.

Chavez Mena refused further comment on the document. But two other politicians who took part confirmed it was the final draft of the accord and awaited only a ceremonial signing by Chavez Mena, ARENA chief Armando Calderon Sol and Democratic Convergence leader Ruben Zamora.

Political and U.N. sources said Chavez and Zamora had planned to travel this week to New York to present the agreement to U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar. From there the politicians were to travel to Mexico to present to leaders of the insurgent army, according to the sources.

The pact was to have been announced amid fanfare Friday at the presidential palace, according to the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, citing the accord's political sensitivity.

The Christian Democrats, who ruled from 1984 to 1989 and comprise the second-largest poli-

Canadian minister quits after airport gun joke

OTTAWA (R) — Canada's housing minister has resigned after security guards detained him at Ottawa Airport when he joked about a gun in luggage, his office said. "I deeply regret that incident," the minister, Alan Redway, said, promising full assistance to police investigating the incident. Canadian airports carry signs warning airline passengers that making jokes about bombs, firearms, or hijackings is an offence. Redway, 40, who represents a Toronto constituency, had been housing minister since January 1989. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney said in a letter to Redway that "under the circumstances, I have recommended... your resignation from the ministry, effective immediately."

Some doctors back euthanasia law

SEATTLE (R) — Nearly half of the doctors in Washington state support a measure that could make it the first U.S. state to legalise euthanasia, according to an opinion poll released Friday. The state's Medical Association said 543 of the 1,105 respondents supported a controversial "death with dignity" initiative now before the Washington legislature. The initiative, which will be submitted to voters in a referendum in November, would permit doctors to help terminally ill patients take their lives. The measure defines terminal illness and outlines some of the types of medical intervention that could be withdrawn to help a patient commit suicide.

Shop rents briefcases to help weather recession

BOSTON (AP) — Budding executives can take heart if they can't afford a status briefcase, one store here is renting out the attaches for the affluent. London Harness Co., a downtown emporium that boasts its 1776 founding makes it the oldest retail store in America, is using a newfangled strategy to woo customers to its decidedly traditional merchandise. London Harness is targeting college kids out for their first interview, and corporate climbers looking to dazzle the bigwigs. Under the plan, a \$950 hand-crafted leather attaché rents for about \$39 a day. That's 4 per cent of the selling price, plus and a hefty deposit. It's just the latest in a series of innovative marketing strategies for staying afloat through one of the worst recessions to hit the area in decades. "One of the statistics about the recession that doesn't get much attention is the fact 75 per cent of the people out of work are white collar," said store owner John McManmon. "A lot of people are interviewing and might not want to spring for a \$500 bag." If the interview goes well, that renter might become a buyer, McManmon said. The rental fees can be put toward purchase. Ranging in price from \$150 to \$950, the all-leather handmade cases come in traditional box styles or the sleeker, more modern designs.

Festival highlights Menotti, Mozart

ROME (AP) — The annual festival of two worlds at Spoleto this summer will open and close with works by its founder, Giancarlo Menotti, who will turn 80 during the festival. Opening night will see the European premier of Italo-American composer's Goya, an opera based on the life of the Spanish romantic painter, according to the schedule. The traditional closing concert in the square in front of the Umbrian hilltown's medieval cathedral will include Menotti's mass Oh Pulcrum and his cantata Muoio Perche' Non Muoio, as well as Mozart's Ave Verum. Menotti said in an interview with the Italian News Agency (ANSA).